BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

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KASTURI RANGA IYENGAR

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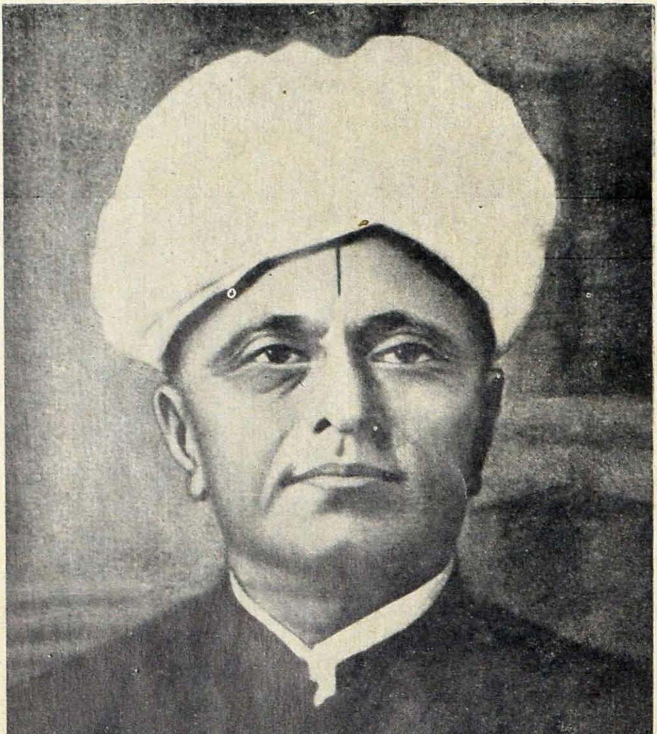
V. K. NARASIMHAN



Builders of Modern India

KASTURI RANGA IYENGAR

V. K. NARASIMHAN

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

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PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

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ABOUT THE SERIES

The object of the Series is the publication of biographies of those eminent sons and daughters of India who have been mainly instrumental in our national renaissance and the struggle for independence.

It is essential for the present and coming generations to know something about these great men and women. It is a matter of regret that, except in a few cases, no authoritative biographies are available. The Series has been planned to remove this lacuna. It is proposed to publish handy volumes containing simple and short biographies of our eminent leaders written by competent persons who know their subject well. The books in the Series will be 200 to 300 pages each and are not intended either to be comprehensive studies or to replace more elaborate biographies.

Though desirable, it may not be possible to publish the biographies in a chronological order. The work of writing these lives has to be entrusted to persons who are well equipped to do so and, therefore, for practical reasons, it is possible that there might be no historical sequence observed. I hope, however, that within a short period all eminent national personalities will figure in this Series.

I am grateful to my esteemed friend, Shri R. R. Diwakar, former Governor of Bihar, for agreeing to take up the onerous task of general editorship of this Series. Shri Diwakar's experience as a writer, as an editor and as a journalist, and his eminence in these fields, will help in getting the best possible books published in the Series.

A list of works that are being taken in hand immediately is printed separately.

New Delhi,
25*th November* 1959.

B. V. KESKAR

FOREWORD

Each race, each culture, possesses its own attributes and excellences. For instance, epic, lyric poetry and the drama as well as wide-ranging and subtle philosophical speculation and dialectic have been characteristic of India. History and tragedy were the specific contributions of Greece to the world. Biography and the essay have been among the special achievements of England and France. India has been deficient in these two branches of literature. Such *Lives* as have appeared in print have been too often uncritical and in the nature of exaggerated or even fabulous narratives, or have been polemical and controversial. The collection and arrangement of biographical material, the presentation of such material in an attractive and arresting manner, and the conception of biography as literature are very rare. In recent years, however, steps have been taken to remedy this deficiency : excellent accounts of the lives of Akbar, Aurangazeb, Shivaji, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dadabhai Naoroji, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Vivekananda and Phirozeshah Mehta have appeared. Brilliant work in the field of biography has been done recently in England and France, and the ventures have concentrated on presenting unvarnished and veracious, even if occasionally unflattering, estimates of the life, character and career of eminent people. The present tendency is to insist not only on appreciative but also critical and balanced treatment of life and character.

The Publications Division of the Government of India has been engaged for some years in the task of bringing out authentic biographies of Indian leaders; and Shri V. K. Narasimhan, Deputy Editor of *The Hindu* and an accomplished journalist, has been charged with the writing of a

biography of Shri S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. In the days before and during the struggle for Swaraj, noteworthy editors and journalists played a creative part in the formation of public opinion and the dissemination of news and views relating to the evolution of India in the social, educational and spiritual spheres, not to mention the political field. Personalities like Surendranath Banerjea and Motilal Ghosh, Tilak and Dr Besant, can never be forgotten in this context; along with them may be named G. Subramania Iyer and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, both of whom were helped by extremely competent associates. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was particularly fortunate in having been assisted by his nephew, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, who was a model of journalistic efficiency and acumen.

Shri V. K. Narasimhan begins the biography with a description of the remarkable ancestors of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. One of them, Sesha Iyengar, seems to have been a person of conspicuous administrative ability. As is well known, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's brother, S. Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar, was a noted administrator who became the Dewan of Baroda, and was the author of a well-documented memorandum on the progress of the Madras Presidency under forty years of British administration.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, like many bright young men of those days, studied at Kumbakonam and, later on, proceeded to Madras and completed his study of the law. After making a trial of government service as Sub-Registrar he practised as a lawyer at Coimbatore. But his heart was not in law. Moreover, he was far too sensitive and shy by disposition to achieve spectacular success in that competitive profession. He devoted much of his attention to politics and public affairs. He was one of the founders of the Madras Mahajana Sabha, the successor of the Madras Native Association which, under the leadership of a very

great Indian leader, Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty, had done fine work in ventilating public grievances.

In 1878, that stalwart among Indian journalists, Shri G. Subramania Iyer, founded *The Hindu* newspaper. Very soon, the famous 'Salem Riots' case took place. A reactionary regime began in Madras under the Governorship of Mountstuart Grant-Duff, and *The Hindu* played a notable part in assailing its policies. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar played an important part in the local politics and in the activities of the Mahajana Sabha. He was one of those who, along with Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao, V. Krishnaswami Iyer, C. Vijiaraghavachariar of Salem and P. Anandacharlu, attended the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1890. In the legal sphere, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar made a mark by his successful conduct of what used to be called the 'Padre's Case' in 1891 arising from the clandestine conversion to Christianity by a missionary of a Hindu boy.

In 1894, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar shifted his legal practice to the Madras High Court from Coimbatore. However, as soon as he had settled down at Madras, he was caught up in politics so much that he had no time to build up a legal practice befitting his talents. He became the legal adviser of *The Hindu* about the year 1900 when M. Veeraraghavachariar and G. Subramania Iyer were yoked uneasily in the Editorship of the paper, both being masterful and unyielding personalities, and neither being inclined to bother about accounts and finance.

The Hindu was started as the weekly organ of the Triplicane Literary Society. As the author remarks, the two survivors of the original group of founders of the paper had little experience of the hard realities of life. Nevertheless, G. Subramania Iyer, a dauntless patriot and a forceful writer, established the tradition of closely-reasoned editorial articles which were characterized by a deep knowledge of

political and economic problems. The paper soon became a tri-weekly and was shifted to Mount Road where the National Press was started. The newspaper secured the support of leading persons like S. Subramania Iyer and C. Sankaran Nair. The Mahajana Sabha also for a long time conducted its business on the premises of *The Hindu* office.

It was in 1889 that *The Hindu* became a daily. At that stage, Indian newspapers did not enjoy the advantage of advertisements on a large scale; nor did the big European firms encourage Indian-owned papers. Some Princely States and far-sighted patrons like the Rajah of Vizianagaram were the mainstay of *The Hindu.* After the death of the Rajah in 1897, the financial condition of the paper became worse. G. Subramania Iyer withdrew from the paper, and it was run for some time by Veeraraghavachariar who, however, realized early that it was essential to transfer the ownership of the paper to a public limited company. Though influentially sponsored, the Company received but poor public response. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar now made up his mind, in spite of opposition from friends and relatives, to purchase the newspaper and conduct it. His assumption of the paper's Editorship in 1905 was venturesome, to say the least. Within a month of such assumption, C. Karunakara Menon, who had worked in *The Hindu* for many years, resigned from it. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, a nephew of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who was practising as a lawyer, on being invited, joined the newspaper.

From the beginning, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was clear in his mind that one of the principal functions of a newspaper was to give accurate, up to date, and varied news from every part of the world; this policy and the practice of paying adequately Indian and foreign correspondents contributed chiefly to the rapid progress of *The Hindu.* Very intrepidly, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar ceased to rely on

donations or special subsidies from Princely States. He invited journalistic contribution from leading publicists from all over India. What was equally important to the editorial policy of the paper was that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, in addition to his preoccupation with national politics, adopted a wide perspective of international affairs. On the national scene, from the beginning he espoused the policy of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in preference to what were termed the ideals of the Moderate school.

The failure of a big English concern, Arbuthnot and Co., gave rise to public agitation resulting in a famous trial. *The Hindu* took the lead in exposing the frauds perpetrated by Sir George Arbuthnot and for bringing the offenders to justice. In the earlier stages, *The Hindu* was almost alone in the campaign; but the conviction of Sir George Arbuthnot and the founding of the Indian Bank as a consequence and in reaction to the state of Indian banking then, increased its popularity.

The Hindu consistently championed the Swadeshi movement and exposed the reactionary policies of the Government. In connection with the 'Tuticorin Sedition' cases, *The Hindu* took an uncompromising line. In the matter of separation of the executive and judicial functions, it played a leading part. G. Subramania Iyer, who had taken up the Editorship of *Swadesamitran,* was arrested at about this time. It was widely rumoured that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, too, was due to be proceeded against. Shri V. K. Narasimhan has done well in mentioning in this context the courageous legal advice given by the Advocates-General of Madras and Bombay in the matter which alone prevented the prosecution of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar.

The Surat Congress of 1907 and the widening differences between the Moderate school of politics and the so-called Extremists, brought out Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's sympathies.

This led to his estrangement from V. Krishnaswami Iyer who was responsible for the Madras Congress in 1908. The unrest all over India at this time culminated in the conviction of Tilak and the deportation of leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai. When the Morley-Minto Reforms were ushered in, *The Hindu* welcomed them. It soon realized, however, that "what is given by the Secretary of State and the Government of India may virtually be taken away by the many local gods and demigods." It is indicative of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's attitude that he declined to attend the Delhi Durbar in December 1911 unless discrimination between European and Indian journals was ended.

Between the years 1912 and 1914, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar interested himself, along with Dr M. C. Nanjunda Rao and Dr T. M. Nair, in the 'Besant Case' which I conducted against Dr Besant at the instance or the Editor of *The Hindu* and Dr Nanjunda Rao. After this case was over, Dr Besant devoted her energies to the cause of Indian Home Rule and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, notwithstanding his personal prejudices against Dr Besant, supported the Home Rule movement. He was also a member of the All-India Congress Committee which worked out the Congress-League Scheme.

Shri V. K. Narasimhan has done a real service in giving almost *in extenso*, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's evidence before the Islington Commission on Public Services in the course of which he set out the attitude of the Indian public towards the Indian Civil Service and the policy carried out on its insistence.

When Mr Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, arrived at Madras, several Indians met him including C. Vijiaraghavachariar, B. N. Sarma, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Dr S. Subramania Iyer, C. Sankaran Nair, S. Srinivasa Iyengar, Dr T. M. Nair and myself. Montagu described Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's memorandum presented to him

then as a crushing indictment of the Government of Madras. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar also presided over a special session of the Provincial Conference held at Madras when he urged that unless the Executive was made subordinate to the Legislative Council, and the latter was made fully representative of the people, no essential improvement could be brought about. About this time, the Rowlatt Commission Report and the happenings in the Punjab greatly exercised public feelings.

In August 1918 a group of Indian Editors including Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was invited to England. In reply to the toast proposed in London by the President of the Institute of Journalists, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar pointed out that neither the press nor the people of England had given adequate attention to the Indian press and its expressions of opinion. Shri V. K. Narasimhan has also pointed out that when Kasturi Ranga Iyengar met King George V and Queen Mary, he tried to dispel the impression that the people of south India were not fit for active military service. The Indian Editors visited the war front and returned convinced that unity of action was essential if the cause of Indian reforms was to succeed.

On his return to India, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar became President of the Anti-Rowlatt Committee and invited Gandhiji to visit Madras; soon afterwards, the fateful Amritsar happenings culminated in General Dyer's disgraceful performances. It is noteworthy that at this time Kasturi Ranga Iyengar attacked with characteristic consistency C. Sankaran Nair, his lifelong friend and helper, for not having resigned from the Viceroy's Executive Council on the issue of the Amritsar happenings. The Press Act was set in motion against *The Hindu* for the article on the Punjab affairs. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar attended the Amritsar Congress and took an important part in framing the resolution

stigmatizing the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms as unacceptable, unsatisfactory and disappointing.

It is unnecessary to recount the events since 1920 which ended in the non-co-operation programme and movement. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, for his part, made his attitude very clear. He objected to Gandhiji's proposal for the withdrawal of children from schools and the abandonment of legal practice by lawyers. He was also against the boycott of elections and of legislatures. He, however, remarked significantly in an editorial that "majorities are not always in the right; but it is politically convenient, except when individual convictions admit of no compromise to assume that they generally are." The Nagpur Congress of 1920 gave a new orientation to Congress policy, and at this session Kasturi Ranga Iyengar supported the resolution on non-co-operation.

Gandhiji's programme had suggested close co-operation between the Congress, the labour unions, the working classes and the Depressed Classes. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar identified himself with many of the labour unions. He also associated himself with the *hartal* on the occasion of the visit to Madras of the Prince of Wales. Soon after, an All-Parties Leaders' Conference met at Bombay but it failed to secure the support of C. Sankaran Nair. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had no hesitation in stating that Sankaran Nair had done a great disservice by publishing at the time his attack on Gandhiji.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the breath-taking events that followed the riots at Chauri Chaura and the arrest of Gandhiji in 1922. One of the last important acts of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was his participation in the Civil Disobedience Committee headed by Pandit Motilal Nehru. His strenuous work on the Committee led to the break-down of his health. Notwithstanding this, he kept up an active interest in the newspaper and the formulation and maintenance of its policy.

He improved the premises of *The Hindu* and established the first Rotary Printing Press in Madras.

During Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's illness C. R. Das visited Madras in connection with his campaign for Council-entry. *The Hindu* dissented from C. R. Das. A result of this attitude was that A. Rangaswami Iyengar, who sided with C. R. Das, started the *Swadesamitran English Weekly*. The Swaraj Party succeeded in its efforts and the Delhi Special session of the Congress voted in favour of Congressmen's entry into the legislatures. *The Hindu* reflected the change in public opinion and welcomed the new unity attained by the Congress. During this period, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's health grew worse, and he passed away in 1923.

In giving us a full, exceedingly well-written and authentic account of the life and career of such an Indian, Shri V. K. Narasimhan has rendered great service to the cause of journalism, and to public life in general. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's life-work was the reorganization and development of a truly national daily which espoused national causes and interests and was truly international and comprehensive in the matter of publication and dissemination of news and views. Mahatma Gandhi gave expression to the prevailing sentiment when he said that "those who followed the columns of *The Hindu* cannot fail to recognize that wherever they saw a change in the editorial policy, it was because with an unerring instinct, he (the Editor) recognized which way the country was going...... A journalist's peculiar function is to read the mind of the country and to give definite and fearless expression to that mind." Objectiveness and a judicial attitude were amongst the conspicuous characteristics of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's outlook and journalistic practice.

Annamalai University,
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Madras.

C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar

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PREFACE

The present generation in India may not fully realize the trials and tribulations through which the Nation had to pass before it won its freedom in 1947. For nearly half a century before Mahatma Gandhi took over the leadership of the freedom movement and transformed the political scene in the country, the main struggle with the foreign rulers was concerned with the attempt to secure improvements in administration, with the redress of administrative grievances and Constitutional 'reform', and not with self-government. In this early phase, a significant role was played by those publicists and journalists who exposed the administrative injustices and inadequacies of foreign rule and affirmed the Nation's right to political and economic progress.

Those were days when an all-powerful bureaucracy could silence its critics by a mere stroke of the pen. Among the publicists who stood out boldly for the country's cause and vigorously asserted the Nation's self-respect and honour were Surendranath Banerjea and Babu Motilal Ghosh in Bengal, Tilak in Maharashtra, and G. Subramania Iyer and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar in Madras. The country owes a great deal to these brave journalists who roused the political consciousness of the people and kept the banner of freedom flying against great odds.

I am deeply obliged to the proprietors of *The Hindu* for the ample facilities they provided me for

the writing of this biography. I owe much to the labours of the late K. Sundara Raghavan, grandson of Dewan Bahadur S. Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar and a grand-nephew of S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who had collected much valuable information about the early history of the family and preserved with great care a considerable volume of letters.

I must also thank Dr C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and Sarvashri S. Varadachariar, K. S. Ramaswami Sastriar and K. V. Rajagopalan, who helped me considerably with valuable personal details about Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's career and provided an insight into his personality. I must in particular express my gratefulness to Dr C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar for writing the Foreword. My colleagues R. A. Padmanabhan and S. Narayanan were of inestimable help to me in the preparation of the biography.

I am thankful to Shri R. R. Diwakar, General Editor of the Series, for the invitation extended to me to write this book. It has been a pleasure as well as a duty to carry out an assignment designed to do honour to a great son of India.

V. K. Narasimhan

CHAPTER 1

THE FAMILY

The Tanjore district in Madras State has long had the reputation of not only being "the granary of the South" but also a nursery of genius and talent. Its annals are replete with the names of scholars, poets, composers, warriors and administrators who have distinguished themselves in varied spheres. Many patriots and public-spirited administrators of our own times hail from this area. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar belongs to this distinguished company.

The earliest account we have of his ancestors dates back to the days of the Vijayanagar Empire. During the closing years of the Empire, there was a minor minister at the Court at Hampi of the name of Veeravalli Krishnamacharya. Krishnamacharya was well versed in the Vedas and Sastras. It was the great South Indian polymath, Appayya Dikshita, who used his influence with the Vijayanagar king to secure for Krishnamacharya the appointment at the Court. Krishnamacharya was, in addition, made chief of Adippuliyur in the south and entrusted with the duty of collecting taxes on behalf of the king. He was also authorized to bring under cultivation all unused arable land in his domain.

Krishnamacharya had several villages under his jurisdiction. Among his assistants was a nephew of his, one Raghava Iyengar, who supervised the revenue operations in Innambur village and its surroundings in the Tanjore district. This Raghava Iyengar was an ancestor of S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, the subject of this biography.

Tanjore's natural advantages as well as geographical

location appear to have predestined it to serve as a flourishing seat of culture and civilization. Lying in the fertile alluvial basin of the Cauvery delta, Tanjore has for centuries produced food crops in abundance. "It was here that the Chola emperors of old had their magnificent capital and it is here that even today the richest towns of the district are situated. The delta covers the whole northern and eastern portions of the district where the Cauvery, with its wide network of branches, irrigates more than half of the district. A vast alluvial plain of unending paddy fields, it is diversified only with the rich groves of mango, coco-nut and other trees, all sloping gently to the sea. A diarist of the eighteenth century was greatly impressed by its long avenues of coco-nut trees lining the roads, by the rows of fine houses, temples, *mandapams, pandals, agraharams* and canals found in every town and village and by the wide area of cultivated lands watered by the network of the Cauvery, and the same description holds good now."*

Innambur is a typical village lying in the Cauvery delta, nestling among paddy fields and coco-nut groves. It is three miles west of Kumbakonam, one of the famous towns in Tanjore district and well known as a seat of learning and a centre of many indigenous industries. The temple records of Innambur speak of its existence as an affluent hamlet in the 9th and 10th centuries. An ancient Shiva temple in the village had been renovated by the Chola kings in the 9th century.

When the Veeravalli family migrated to Innambur, there was only a Shiva temple in the village. When an opportunity occurred, they installed an image of Lord Venkateswara in the village in a shrine which has since grown into the present impressive Vishnu temple of the place. This

*Tanjore District Handbook, 1957

image is reputed to have originally belonged to the famous Vishnu shrine on the Tirumalai Hills at Tirupati. During the unsettled years following the fall of the Vijayanagar Empire, when fear of Muslim incursions was haunting the minds of the people of the south, attempts were made by those in charge of the various temples and shrines to safeguard the temple images by removing them to places of safety or by hiding them in forests and remote places secure from the danger of invasion. When Tirupati was in danger, one of the images of the Lord, along with those of the goddesses, was sent to Navalpakkam in Chingleput district for safe custody. Veeravalli Krishnamacharya secured this image for installation at Innambur, and thus the Vishnu temple in Innambur came into being.

With the fall of Vijayanagar, Tanjore came under the Nayak rulers for some time; and Mahratta rule was established in Tanjore in the latter half of the 17th century. For nearly a century the Mahrattas ruled over Tanjore. By the end of the century the East India Company was steadily extending its sway over south India. In 1798, Raja Serfoji came to the Tanjore throne with the aid of the British. Serfoji entered into a treaty with the British by which he ceded his country, excepting the Fort of Tanjore, to the British in perpetuity in return for an annual payment. The British were to carry on the revenue and judicial administration without any interference from him. The arrangement left Serfoji free to devote himself to the pursuit of literature and the arts. He was greatly interested in Eastern and Western learning, and cultivated many languages. He assiduously built up a large library of *cadjan* manuscripts, and even started a printing press, a novelty in those days, with types in granite. Serfoji was also a collector of rare and old coins, and acquired a good number of paintings.

The Innambur descendants of Veeravalli Krishna-

macharya served under Serfoji. One of them, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, held the post of Paymaster of the Royal Forces. His younger brother, Srinivasa Iyengar, was a minister at Serfoji's court.

This Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who held the post of Paymaster of the Royal Forces, had five sons, the third of whom was Sesha Iyengar. Sesha Iyengar grew up to hold the position of *Jawab navis* under the Tanjore Collector. It was his duty to scrutinize all Marathi documents coming for the Collector's perusal and to give a summary of their contents in English.

Sesha Iyengar had picked up a good knowledge of English and his notes on the documents coming before him were found very useful by the Collector. Sesha Iyengar wielded considerable influence outside his office, thanks to his standing with the Collector. The members of the Tanjore royal family used to seek his help whenever they wanted something to be done by the British Collector. Sesha Iyengar was held in high esteem by such eminent men of those days as the Hon'ble Mr V. Rama Iyengar, Sir T. Muthuswami Iyer and Sir V. Bashyam Iyengar. They valued his opinions on the administrative problems of the district as also on problems of agriculture.

Sesha Iyengar had three sons and four daughters. The eldest of the sons, S. Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar, entered Government service and rose to the position of Inspector-General of Registration in the Madras Government. (This was one of the few top administrative offices to which Indians were appointed in the years before 1900.) Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar also served for some years as Dewan of Baroda. In 1892 he wrote the monumental book, "Memorandum on the Progress of the Madras Presidency during the Last Forty Years of British Administration".

Sesha Iyengar's second son, Soundara Raja Iyengar, also took to Government service and retired as a Deputy Collector in the Madras Presidency.

The third and last son of Sesha Iyengar was Kasturi Ranga Iyengar.

CHAPTER 2

EARLY YEARS

Kasturi Ranga was born on December 15, 1859. The corresponding date, according to the Tamil almanac, is the 2nd of Margazhi in the year Siddharthi. His birth star was Makham.

It was a time of momentous change in the administration of the country. Two years earlier the Great Uprising had run its tragic course in Northern India. It marked yet another milestone in India's long and troubled history. Only distant ripples of this event seem to have reached Madras, which, however, hailed with the rest of the country the great change that followed: the transfer of the administration of India to the British Crown. Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 was greeted as heralding the dawn of a new chapter in the history of India under the British. The Proclamation contained not only the famous guarantee regarding "freedom from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects", but also carried the assurance that "so far as it may be, our subjects of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to office in our services, the duties of which they may be called for by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge."

Sesha Iyengar, like many others of his generation, could sense the changes that would come in the administration of the country under the new dispensation. As one who had himself benefited from his knowledge of English and as a shrewd man of the world, he realized that many new opportunities for preferment and promotion in the services would come to those who had a knowledge of English.

Some three decades earlier, the great controversy between the Anglicists and the Orientalists with regard to the pattern of education to be encouraged in India under British rule had been finally settled by Macaulay's famous Minute. English schools were being started at different places. The Madras Presidency, as one of the earliest areas to come under the British administration, was also among the first to take advantage of the spread of education in English.

Among the new schools to be started under this policy, which later established a great reputation for themselves, was the Provincial School at Kumbakonam, founded in 1854. It provided for education up to the matriculation standard. Sesha Iyengar naturally thought of sending his eldest son, Srinivasa Raghavan, to Kumbakonam for his high school education when the boy reached the school-going age. He had to set up for this purpose a separate establishment at Kumbakonam.

The Kumbakonam Provincial School was lucky to have as its Headmaster W. A. Porter, a first-rate teacher filled with a deep love for his students. His name is to this day lovingly cherished in Kumbakonam. Porter joined the Provincial School in 1863. Among the boys studying in the High School at the time was young Srinivasa Raghavan. He impressed Porter by his passion for mathematics and his outstanding record in the school. Srinivasa Raghavan matriculated in 1863 and continued his studies at Kumbakonam for two more years as, in 1864, the school was raised to the status of a Second-Grade College.

When Srinivasa Raghavan finished his F.A. (First in Arts, which later came to be known as the Intermediate in Arts), Porter was so keen on the boy's further studies that he persuaded Sesha Iyengar to send his son to Madras to join the Presidency College. Madras at the time was not directly linked by rail and the journey from Kumbakonam

involved an arduous and occasionally perilous trek by bullock cart spread over fifteen days. For the orthodox, it meant also carrying provisions for a fortnight and cooking their own food at wayside halts. If despite these difficulties Sesha Iyengar was persuaded to send his son to Madras, it was largely because of the friendly advice of Porter who foresaw a bright future for the lad. As there were no hostels then in Madras, Sesha Iyengar sent Srinivasa Raghavan with the boy's maternal grandparents who ran a home for him there.

The Provincial School and College at Kumbakonam achieved such a reputation under Porter that in 1872 the Director of Public Instruction, Lt. Col. R. M. Macdonald, described it as "the Cambridge of South India". The College earned this appellation thanks largely to the fine band of mathematics students who had achieved distinction there. Many of the prominent lawyers and administrators in Madras, who distinguished themselves in later years, remembered with gratitude the kindness and encouragement they had received during their school days from Porter. It was well known at the time that Porter gave away a good slice of his salary in unobtrusive aid to indigent but promising students.

Kasturi Ranga was sent to the Provincial School when he was about 12. His earlier schooling had been at Innambur and at Kapisthalam where Sesha Iyengar had been sent by the Court of Wards in 1869 as Manager of the Kapisthalam Estate.

Very little is known of Kasturi Ranga's life at Kumbakonam except that he was quite a diligent student. The only incident of his school days that we know of is one which was recounted by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar himself. Addressing the students of the Kumbakonam College Hostel in 1920, he related humorously a prank that he had once

played. There was a classmate of his who was always coming first in the tests and who was going about in a rather proud and arrogant manner. Wishing to teach him a lesson, Kasturi Ranga one day hid the boy's notebooks in the dry bed of the Cauvery, which flows by the side of the School. He had intended to return the notebooks after watching his victim's mortification. But, as fate would have it, Kasturi Ranga could not locate the exact spot in the sands where he had buried the notebooks and had to keep mum about the whole affair, while the butt of his practical joke lost his precious notebooks.

While still at school at Kumbakonam, Kasturi Ranga was married to Kanakammal, who was then about ten years old. She was the daughter of Kadamangudi Gopala Iyengar, a landowner of Kavalkulam village near Kumbakonam. Such early marriages were the rule in those days, but the marriage hardly interfered with the further educational career of Kasturi Ranga.

When Kasturi Ranga completed his matriculation examination, Sesha Iyengar preferred to send him to Madras for higher studies, although he could have continued for two more years at Kumbakonam. Like his elder brothers who had preceded him, Kasturi Ranga joined the Presidency College, which in those days was situated at Nungambakkam in what is now known as the Old College Compound.

Kasturi Ranga, though he did not achieve the academic brilliance of his eldest brother, was undoubtedly much above the average and was known to be a keen student of Milton, Mill, Bacon and many of the classical English authors. He was particularly proficient in English and acquired at the College a command of the language which was later to be put to good use in his work in *The Hindu*.

Sesha Iyengar passed away during the summer of 1876.

Kasturi Ranga was the only son who happened to be by his side when he died. The father's death was a great loss to the family, but as Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar had entered service by then, Kasturi Ranga had no difficulty in continuing with his studies.

After taking his Arts degree in 1879, Kasturi Ranga joined the Law course in the Presidency College: a separate Law College had not yet come into existence. Kasturi Ranga did not get through his Law (B.L.) examination in the first attempt. He decided to take up a post somewhere and write his law examination again later.

In April 1881 he secured a post as Sub-Registrar in the Registration Department of the Madras Government, through the good offices of Vembakkam Seshachari, who was then Head Clerk in the Presidency College, and the Hon'ble Mr V. Rama Iyengar, who was the first Indian to become Inspector-General of Registration in Madras. In joining the Registration Department, Kasturi Ranga was following what had become by then a beaten path. In those days when the avenues open to Indians for entering Government service were severely limited, many law graduates began their official career as Sub-Registrars. Several of them became famous in later life, as, for instance, Sir V. Bashyam Iyengar.

Sub-Registrars at the time were not paid a fixed monthly salary. Their remuneration depended on the stamp value of the documents presented before them for registration. On this basis Kasturi Ranga was earning between 35 and 40 rupees a month.

Kasturi Ranga served as Sub-Registrar at Tiruvayyaru in Tanjore district and later at Vriddhachalam in South Arcot district. During this period, he earned the goodwill and esteem of his subordinates as well as the public by his conscientiousness and ability.

The work of a Sub-Registrar was by no means exacting and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar found time during this period to study the functioning of local bodies and even write a book about them. In 1882, when the Madras Local Self-Government Act was passed, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar came out with a book in Tamil, *Sthaanika Suya Aatchi,* in which he brought out in lucid Tamil the merits of the new Act. The book was considered so useful that it was prescribed as a textbook in schools.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar prepared for his B. L. examination while in service and got through it in 1884. Among others who passed with him that year were many who were to distinguish themselves later on at the bar. The list of budding legal luminaries included V. Krishnaswami Iyer, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, Dewan Bahadur Ch. Narayana Rao, Sir P. Rajagopalachari, Dewan Bahadur T. R. Ramachandra Aiyar and T. V. Venkatarama Iyer.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had not found official life congenial to his temperament and so, as soon as he passed his B. L. examination, he resigned and got himself apprenticed to Sir V. Bashyam Iyengar, who was then the foremost lawyer in Madras.

Having done his apprenticeship, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was enrolled as a Vakil on March 31, 1885. Although it might have been natural to expect him to set up practice at Madras, he chose to go to Coimbatore to begin his career as a lawyer. The reasons for his electing to leave Madras, where he had been an apprentice under the foremost lawyer and jurist of the day, and where his elder brother, S. Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar, had immense prestige and influence which could have been used to advantage, are not clear. One possible explanation is that he calculated that it might be easier for him to make a mark in the profession in an up-and-coming town like Coimbatore than in the

metropolis where he would have to contend against an array of lawyers with established reputations. Many of his relatives and friends thought that he might find himself in unfamiliar surroundings at Coimbatore and that things might be hard for him there. He, however, felt confident that he would make a name for himself. As a close friend of his recalled in later years, he was "sensitive by nature; he was of a shy and retiring disposition. His speech was slow and it was thought by many that the above defects—if defects they were—would not carry him very far in the profession. Within a short time of his setting up practice, he had falsified the apprehensions of his friends and relations. He had a lucrative practice, was respected by the judges before whom he appeared and commanded the confidence of the public. He was not a careless engineer who left open the waste-valve of his engine and allowed the steam to run down. On the other hand, he was a modest, silent, earnest man and he was successful because all his powers were concentrated upon the performance of his task."

Even while he was doing his apprenticeship, he took a lively interest in politics and public affairs, which twenty years later were to become his ruling passion. In 1884—a year before the founding of the Indian National Congress—an association styled the Madras Mahajana Sabha was founded in Madras to serve as a forum for the expression of public opinion in the capital of the Presidency. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was a founding member of the Sabha.

It is worth recalling the circumstances in which the Mahajana Sabha was formed, for in the development of political consciousness in Madras Presidency the Mahajana Sabha played a very important role.

Towards the middle of the last century, a band of patriotic citizens in Madras had constituted themselves into an

association called the Madras Native Association, under the leadership of the Hon'ble Mr Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty, "for the investigation and ventilation of public grievances". The methods adopted by them were to submit petitions and memorials to the authorities in India and in England on the grievances that called for redress. This Association rendered valuable service and was responsible for bringing several local grievances to the attention of the Company authorities in England. It had a considerable measure of success in getting several grievances redressed. One of the memorials of the Association submitted in 1852 to the President of the Board of Control of the East India Company and to the House of Commons dealt with the unsympathetic and harsh nature of the administration by the officers of the Company, and pleaded for the transfer of the administration of the country from the Company to the direct control of the Crown. Some time after the submission of this petition, Mr Danby Seymour, a Member of the British Parliament, visited Madras for the purpose of enquiring into the allegations of torture of ryots by revenue officers to secure payment of taxes. His report to the Court of Directors resulted in the appointment of what was called the "Torture Commission" and the eventual abolition of the barbarous methods of collecting land revenue.

The Madras Native Association also published a journal called *Crescent,* the first of its kind conducted by Indians.

Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty passed away in 1868 and with his death the affairs of the Madras Native Association languished, and the Association itself and its journal passed into oblivion.

In 1878, when *The Hindu* was founded as a weekly newspaper by six intrepid young men imbued with a sense of public service, a new era began in the political life of south India. The founders of the paper—G. Subramania

Iyer, M. Veeraraghavachariar, T. T. Rangachariar, P. V. Rangachariar, D. Keshava Row Pant and N. Subba Rao Pantulu—took steps to revive the Madras Native Association under the presidentship of V. Bashyam Iyengar. The revived body had a number of Government officials also among its members as there was no ban then on Government servants engaging themselves in what were innocuous political activities. But in 1881, when Sir Mountstuart Grant-Duff became the Governor of Madras, a new regime of repression was inaugurated in Madras Presidency. Although Government servants were not openly forbidden participation in political associations, those actively connected with the Madras Native Association were looked upon with suspicion by the Government. The result was that many leading official members had to dissociate themselves from the organization. With their exit the Association once again became defunct.

The series of repressive measures that the Grant-Duff regime launched in connection with the Salem riots*

*In 1882, there was a three-day riot in Salem as a result of a Hindu-Muslim feud. Ignoring repeated Court rulings, the Muslims objected to Hindu processions being taken along a certain street in which a mosque was situated. This incensed the Hindus, a riot ensued, and in its course the mosque was razed to the ground. Special police was posted in the town, and law and order was re-established. The Government also appointed a Special Magistrate. He did his work so indiscriminately that ten leading citizens including C. Vijiaraghavachariar, an eminent pleader of the town, were prosecuted and sentenced on various counts. The Magistrate issued "blank warrants" in which the police filled in the names of any person they thought fit. Vijiaraghavachariar appealed to the High Court and established his innocence. He also established the innocence of the nine others and had them released, and proceeded against those who gave false evidence against him and had them punished for perjury. He also had those Government servants, who had been dismissed from service for giving evidence in his favour, reinstated in service.

became so intolerable that many leading men felt that it was necessary to have an association to give organized expression to the rising tide of popular discontent, lest it should find vent in undesirable directions.

It was thus in an atmosphere of tension and widespread public resentment that the Madras Mahajana Sabha was established in 1884. Almost all the public workers in the City enrolled themselves as members and, under its banner, intensive political work was carried on. The offices of the Sabha were located on the premises of *The Hindu.*

The Madras Mahajana Sabha was coeval with similar institutions started in Calcutta, Bombay and Poona about the same time. It was during and after the Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon that the Mahajana Sabha began to be an effective force in the ventilation of public opinion. Many prominent Indian publicists like Sir T. Madhava Rao, Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao, Poondi Ranganatha Mudaliar, T. Rangachari, Mr Justice C. Sankaran Nair and S. Subramania Iyer helped and advised the Sabha. The history of the Mahajana Sabha became, in fact, for many years, so far as Madras was concerned, the history of politics in Southern India, and the Indian National Congress found one of its best auxiliary helpers in the Mahajana Sabha. The hall of the Mahajana Sabha was freely available for all political meetings, which, of course, in those days were not like the mass assemblies of today. Only the educated non-officials took part in them. Often they had the sympathy and support of many Indian officials as well. C. Sankaran Nair was President of the Sabha before he accepted office as Government Pleader.

CHAPTER 3

AN INFLUENTIAL LAWYER

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar chose well in deciding to set up practice at Coimbatore, which was beginning to gain in importance and affluence. Coimbatore had many attractions besides its salubrious climate. Situated on a large plateau of considerable elevation—about 1300 to 1400 feet above sea level—the town had for its distant back-drop the magnificent Blue Mountains (the Nilgiris) range to the north and the west. The district, of which it was the headquarters, was noted for its energetic farming community, who specialized in the cultivation of cotton. The town was destined to grow into a great textile centre and a beehive of modern industry. It is today known as the Manchester of south India, and is the third largest city in Madras State.

Coimbatore's growing importance as an urban centre was reflected in the establishment of a municipality there in 1864. The Municipal Council consisted of 5 nominated and 15 elected Councillors, with an elected Chairman to preside over it.

When Kasturi Ranga Iyengar came to Coimbatore in 1885, his prinicipal purpose was to make his name as a lawyer. But very soon he found himself drawn into the town's civic politics. The local leaders were aware of his interest in public affairs and the part that he had played in the Mahajana Sabha at Mad . When the elections to the local Municipal Council came along within a few months of his arrival, they pitched upon him to contest for one of the elective seats. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was elected without any difficulty.

It was a rare honour indeed for a young man of 26, who had barely settled down to a career at the bar, to be elected to the Council and to be held in such high esteem by the townsmen.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar found himself drawn to a variety of other public activities in the town. He was appointed Honorary Magistrate and Jail Visitor. His election to the Municipal Council was followed by his nomination to the Coimbatore District Board. He held this position for seven years till 1892.

He was in constant demand for presiding over public meetings convened for various purposes. As one who took every one of his responsibilities seriously, his speeches at these meetings were noted for their information, clarity and sound advice. To encourage serious study and discussion of public questions by students, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar helped in the formation of the Students' Literary Association in 1886. Many leading public men like T. Sadasiva Iyer and T. Vijayaraghavachariar were interested in the Association, which served as a useful cultural and literary forum in the town. The Association celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1936.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and his small circle of friends, who were mostly lawyers, were responsible for the founding of the Cosmopolitan Club at Coimbatore. They used to spend the week-ends at a nearby hill resort, where they would occasionally invite eminent musicians to give concerts. The week-end private concerts gave them the idea of starting a Club in the town itself which could arrange for music concerts and other recreational facilities for the public. The Club was started on 1st February, 1891.

The first Managing Committee, of which Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was a member, decided to purchase a site for the Club. Funds were raised by the members subscribing

Rs. 50 each, and the Committee was able to purchase a site, nearly four acres in extent, for Rs. 400. It speaks volumes for the foresight with which the site was chosen that to this day the Coimbatore Cosmopolitan Club has been carrying on at the same place, though its membership and activities have greatly expanded over the years.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar continued to take a keen interest in the activities of the Madras Mahajana Sabha even after he had settled down at Coimbatore. At the second plenary session of the Sabha in 1885, which he attended as a delegate from Coimbatore, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar tabled a memorandum pleading for the establishment of arbitration courts with a view to relieving the regular judiciary of heavy accumulation of work and avoiding the delays and expense associated with litigation in courts. P. Rangayya Naidu presided over this session of the Sabha, and among the prominent persons who took part in it were G. Subramania Iyer, M. Veeraraghavachariar, S. A. Swaminatha Aiyar of Tanjore, P. Kesava Pillai of Anantapur, Sir S. Subramania Iyer and Rai Bahadur P. Anandacharlu.

From the time the Indian National Congress was founded Kasturi Ranga Iyengar took an active interest in it. He was a member of the Coimbatore District Congress Committee during his entire stay at Coimbatore. In December 1887, the third session of the Indian National Congress was held at Madras. The meeting to elect delegates from the Coimbatore district was held on 7th December, 1887, and was presided over by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar.

When the Congress met at Calcutta in 1890, a strong and distinguished contingent of over sixty gentlemen representing Madras attended the session. This delegation, under the venerable leadership of Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao, proceeded to Calcutta by steamer. Kasturi Ranga

Iyengar was one of the party, which included C. Vijiaraghavachariar, V. Krishnaswami Iyer, P. R. Sundara Iyer and Rai Bahadur P. Anandacharlu.

Despite his many-sided social, civic and political activities, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar did not neglect his practice. He soon established his reputation as the leader of the bar at Coimbatore. He was at home in criminal as well as civil law, while constitutional law absorbed him. Among his prominent contemporaries in the legal profession at Coimbatore were K. Narayana Sastriar, C. M. Padmanabhachar, and Rao Bahadur T. S. Balakrishna Iyer. Speaking of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's abilities as a lawyer, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer on one occasion said that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar possessed, even when young, all the qualities that went to make an able lawyer.

He was one of the founders, and the first Secretary, of the Coimbatore Bar Association which began in November 1889 with a membership of 30. When the Association celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1939, it duly honoured Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's memory with the unveiling of a portrait in its hall.

One of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's achievements as a lawyer at Coimbatore was his able and successful conduct of what was known as the "Padre's Case" of 1891. A Christian priest had made arrangements to convert a Hindu boy of 16; the parents of the boy got wind of this, and they wanted the priest to restore the boy to them. The priest refused, and legal proceedings were instituted. The District Munsif issued orders for the production of the boy. When the priest did not comply, proceedings were started against him for contempt of court and he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar appeared for the boy's parents, while the priest was defended by eminent barristers. As a result of his success in this

case, which became a minor *cause celebre* in the district, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's name became well known.

In the same year, 1891, the Age of Consent Bill was circulated by the Government of India for eliciting public opinion. After the Queen's Proclamation in 1858, the Indian Government had studiously avoided interfering with the religious and social matters pertaining to the Hindu and other communities in the country. In 1891, however, during the Viceroyalty of Lord Lansdowne, the Age of Consent Bill was introduced, and it raised almost as much public outcry as the abolition of *sati* sixty years earlier. The Bill was intended to forbid the consummation of marriage before the wife had reached the age of twelve, and this was considered a far-reaching reform in those days. Public meetings were held all over the country to express opinions for and against the measure. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was among those who supported the Bill, and he convened a public meeting at Coimbatore to mobilize support to the measure. It was then feared that the orthodox sections of the local public might raise trouble and disturb the meeting. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who presided, conducted the meeting, however, with such consummate skill and defended the provisions of the Bill in such a persuasive manner that he carried the audience with him. He freely permitted all sections of the audience to explain their points of view and summed up the various points of view in a masterly fashion. His sense of fairness and lucid exposition of his own point of view carried the day, and the meeting ended without a hitch after resolving to support the Bill.

After nine years of legal practice at Coimbatore Kasturi Ranga Iyengar decided to shift the venue of his activities to the metropolis, the City of Madras. The reasons that impelled him to end his lucrative practice in a district

centre and start life anew in the competitive metropolis were simple. According to Dr C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar followed the example of Ramaswami Aiyar's father and Sir S. Subramania Iyer and several other lawyers who in the eighties of the last century migrated to the City from mofussil towns in the hope and confidence that they could make a mark in the High Court. M. R. Narasimha Iyengar, a close friend and confidant of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, has said that he "found that a provincial town like Coimbatore did not give full scope for his energies". While this may have been the primary reason, perhaps there was another one, too. Just as he did not feel at home in Government service, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar did not feel too attached to the bar either. Something other than law was calling him.

Thus in 1894 we see Kasturi Ranga Iyengar getting back to Madras, ostensibly to practise in the High Court, but really to take a more active interest in public affairs. This decision of his at that time surprised his friends and relatives, some of whom advised him against the change. But having made the decision, he was not the person to resile from it.

Similarly, he was a man of his word, as an incident connected with the sale of his house at Coimbatore proves. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar wished to sell the house when he decided to move to Madras. The house was in a Brahmin locality. He had agreed to sell it to a non-Brahmin friend of his. On hearing about this, there was a stir among the Brahmin residents of the place, some of whom came forward with offers of higher prices to keep out a non-Brahmin from the locality. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar refused to be tempted and said that a word once given should be kept. The incident also shows that he rose above caste

prejudices—a trait which he displayed throughout his political career.

The regard and esteem in which Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was held at Coimbatore continued long after he had left the town. Five years later, in a letter to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's elder brother, Dewan Bahadur P. Rajaratna Mudaliar wrote from Coimbatore:

Coimbatore,
21st April, '99

My dear Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar,

I am trying to induce the good folk of the place to start a Rural Agricultural Bank and I think the attempt might be successful. I wish your brother Kasturi Ranga Iyengar were here. What a splendid name he has left here. You are better known as Kasturi Iyengar's brother than as Inspector-General of Registration. He would have started the Bank without any difficulty if only the officials had given a helping hand. There must be some one to put the will in such undertakings and keep the machinery going until it gets into good working order and its use is fully appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
P. Rajaratna Mudaliar

By the time Kasturi Ranga Iyengar left Coimbatore for Madras, three daughters and two sons had been born to him. The first daughter was born in 1882 and was married in 1891 when she was barely nine. The second daughter was born in 1885 and her marriage was celebrated in the year of his leaving Coimbatore. In 1887, a son was born who was named Srinivasan. A second son, Gopalan, was born at Coimbatore in 1890, and in 1893, the third daughter.

CHAPTER 4

ENTRY INTO POLITICS

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar returned to Madras in 1894, nine years after he had left it to make his career at Coimbatore. When he left the City he had just been enrolled as a Vakil after a year's apprenticeship under an eminent leader of the bar; when he returned, he had won his spurs in the mofussil where he was acknowledged as the leader of the local bar. He had earned, besides, a name as an assiduous public worker and an ardent nationalist.

With this background, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar settled down at Mylapore, an aristocratic part of the City where many leading lawyers of the day lived. As luck would have it, almost from the moment of his arrival Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was caught up in the group politics which prevailed in the City and which determined his own subsequent political evolution. There were in Madras two groups which were ranged against each other. One group, known as the Mylapore group, was led by V. Krishnaswami Iyer, P. R. Sundara Iyer, V. C. Desikachariar, T. R. Ramachandra Aiyar and, later, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, and up to a point Sir S. Subramania Iyer and C. R. Pattabhirama Iyer. The other group was known as the Egmore group, of which the leading lights were C. Sankaran Nair, T. Rangachari, Ryru Nambiar and Dr T. M. Nair. When Kasturi Ranga Iyengar decided to set up legal practice at Madras, he did not get the encouragement he expected from the Mylapore leaders, while the Egmore group welcomed him. He found that the Mylapore group did not generally take kindly to the arrival of mofussil lawyers for practising in the

High Court. As a result, though Kasturi Ranga Iyengar lived at Mylapore, his psychological affiliations were with C. Sankaran Nair and Dr T. M. Nair.

While these differences within the world of law and politics in the City did not stand in the way of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's making reasonable progress in his profession, his major interests were developing in a different direction. As his professional colleague and contemporary, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, observed much later, in 1935, while unveiling a portrait of his in the Gokhale Hall: "Kasturi Ranga Iyengar soon acquired a fairly successful practice; but success at the bar does not depend upon mere abilities, but upon a variety of accidents. Notwithstanding his clear-headedness, sound knowledge of law and gifts of expression, he did not rise to the heights of the profession. One reason, perhaps, for this was that his heart was not so much in the legal profession as in politics."

Politics and public affairs became his dominant interests, and during the next ten years there was no major political event in Madras with which he was not actively associated. He naturally took a keen interest in the work of the Madras Mahajana Sabha which he had earlier helped to found.

When the Indian National Congress met in 1898 at Madras, and again in 1903, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar took a leading part in the organization of its sessions as the Secretary of the Reception Committee in both the years.

His time was taken up with professional associations also. From the time he settled down at Madras, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was a member of the Committee of the Vakils' Association in the City. In 1897, he became the Association's Joint Secretary.

In 1897, V. Bashyam Iyengar, who was the uncrowned king of the Madras bar, was appointed temporarily as Advocate-General of Madras. The Vakils' Association

felt that the time was opportune to impress on the powers that be the need to Indianize the post, which had till then been reserved for English barristers-at-law. A good beginning had been made and the Vakils' Association wanted to press home the advantage. It sent up a memorial to the Government of India pointing out that Bashyam Iyengar's eminence in the legal profession was admitted on all hands and that the claims of Indian lawyers of his stature should not be overlooked in the appointment of Advocate-General. There was no immediate response to this memorial, but it helped to keep the Government informed of the prevailing opinion in the legal profession.

An attraction of life in Madras for Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was that he could benefit from the suggestions and advice of his eldest brother, Dewan Bahadur S. Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar, who was then Inspector-General of Registration in the Madras Government. The two brothers were very much attached to each other and used to discuss questions of public importance; Kasturi Ranga Iyengar also had many opportunities of meeting the prominent men in different walks of life who came to see his brother.

Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar's confidence in his younger brother was such that when in 1896 he was offered the post of Dewan of Baroda, he sent Kasturi Ranga Iyengar to Baroda to meet the Gaekwar to get some points clarified. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar met him and, after discussions with him, commended the offer to his brother. Only then did Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar agree to go to Baroda.

After three years in Baroda, Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar found that things had not gone as he had hoped and that the only course open to him was to resign the Dewanship and get back to Madras. He found that the Gaekwar was interfering unduly, and that the Dewan was given no

real power. Not being given to hasty action, Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar wrote to his younger brother apprising him of the situation and asking him to sound the reactions of friends like P. Chentsal Rao, S. Subramania Iyer and V. Bashyam Iyengar on the advisability of his resigning his post. The letter which Kasturi Ranga Iyengar wrote to his elder brother at this time is remarkable for the spirit of independence which it reveals and the light it throws on Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's shrewd judgment of men.

Mylapore,
25th March, 1899

My dear brother,

I returned only the day before yesterday from Coimbatore with Sundaram and her child. I found your letter awaiting me. I showed it with its enclosures to Mr Chentsal Rao the same evening and went also to Mr Justice Subramania Iyer's house but was not able to see him. I (shall) go to him today again. Mr. Chentsal Rao seemed at first to think that you were perhaps a little precipitate, but when I read to him the whole correspondence, he said that it was not in you to do anything in a hasty manner and he had no doubt the circumstances left you no other alternative, although he felt very sorry for the result. For my own part, I am glad of the resolution you have come to, for I believe that your going to Baroda has not benefited you in any respect and has been productive of nothing but unhappiness, mental worry and risk to health. From my short acquaintance with the Gaekwar, I did not form a very high opinion of him, but I thought, seeing the great effort he was then making to secure a competent minister, he would not possibly fail to appreciate you when you have served under him for some time; and, if after two and a half years of devoted and unremitting work, the Gaekwar could bring himself to say to you that he had no wish to persuade you to come to a conclusion but what is agreeable to yourself, it seems to me that the only natural sequence to it is your laying down the office with the dignified remonstrance and rebuke contained in

your letter to him. The Gaekwar has not, however, belied his reputation.

I am,
Yours affly.,
S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar

This supreme concern for one's self-respect, integrity and independence stood out in all that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar did throughout his career.

Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar left Baroda, but was soon to be called back by the Gaekwar. For reasons partly personal and partly of state, he was anxious to secure his services again. But Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar wanted to get specific assurances before he accepted the invitation. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was sent to Baroda in September 1899, and on hearing from him that the Gaekwar was agreeable to all the terms that Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar stipulated, the latter agreed to serve a second time as Dewan.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's public activities naturally brought him into close touch with those who were conducting *The Hindu*. *The Hindu* premises in Mount Road were in those days the centre of a great deal of political activity. Shortly after his arrival in Madras, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had become Legal Adviser to *The Hindu*, which was then being conducted by G. Subramania Iyer and M. Veeraraghavachariar. He continued as Legal Adviser from 1895 till he himself purchased the paper in 1905.

The Legal Adviser had once to act as a conciliator between two assertive personalities. The trouble arose in 1902 when G. Subramania Iyer had retired from control of *The Hindu* and was editing and conducting the Tamil daily *Swadesamitran*. Veeraraghavachariar was also running a Tamil daily called *Hindu Nesan*. The mercurial Veeraraghavachariar published an article in *Hindu Nesan* which G. Subramania Iyer considered defamatory. Erstwhile

friends became violently antagonistic to one another, and it was left to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar to effect a reconciliation between them.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's association with *The Hindu* was not limited to his being its Legal Adviser. He was also a frequent contributor to its columns on matters legal, political and social.

In November 1902, *The Hindu* wrote an editorial on the election of the Madras University Member to the Madras Legislative Council, a vacancy caused by the resignation of the Rev. Dr Miller. The paper supported the election of C. Sankaran Nair or C. Vijiaraghavachariar, who were suggested as possible non-official candidates. *The Hindu* urged that it was important that, as the seat was an elected one, only a non-official member of the University should be elected.

In the controversy that ensured, a well-known educationist, Prof. M. Rangacharya, took the view that though the seat was an elected seat, it was neither necessary nor required by law that the representative elected should be a non-official.

This view was controverted by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who quoted from the Secretary of State for India in support of the view that the ratio of non-officials to officials in the legislature should not be reduced by the election of an official in an elective constituency. (The official bloc in the Legislature consisted of nominated members.) Kasturi Ranga Iyengar further pointed out that however eminent or qualified he might be, the official candidate, by virtue of his official position, would never be independent enough freely to exercise his judgment. His letter on the subject stated : "Nobody can for a moment suppose that an elected member of the Legislative Council should always oppose the Government. At the same time, it will be vain to deny that seasonable and temperate opposition to the measures of the

Government, as the need for its arises, is productive of nothing but the highest good to the country. The fact that by the disabling circumstances of his position an official is unable to take part in this kind of work, will in my humble opinion, detract much from his usefulness as a member of the Legislative Council."

Public opinion was strongly on the side of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, and an eminent publicist of the day, Ganjam Venkatarathnam, fully supported him, stating that to his mind "the views so ably expressed by that well-informed lawyer—Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar—in your columns are much more in accord with the intentions of the framers of the Indian Councils Act, 1892, and more consistent with the real needs and wants of the Indian Legislative Councils than those of Professor Rangacharya."

* * *

On December 11, 1903, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar suffered a heavy bereavement in the premature death of his eldest brother, Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar. The brothers were greatly attached to each other. Neither of them would do anything important without consulting the other. Besides, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar owed a great deal to the guidance and help of his brother. The loss of his brother was a great blow to him, particularly when he was trying to establish himself in the legal profession in the metropolis.

CHAPTER 5

ACQUISITION OF *THE HINDU*

The six ardent young men who launched *The Hindu* in 1878 as the weekly organ of the Triplicane Literary Society could hardly have dreamt that in doing so they were laying the foundations of a great medium of public education, which in the course of years would become one of the leading newspapers of the country. All of them were fresh from college and hard hardly any resources to boast of. Only two of them, G. Subramania Iyer and M. Veeraraghavachariar, had any experience of the hard realities of life, having been schoolmasters for a time. Three others were studying in the Law College. The brunt of the work involved in bringing out the journal thus fell upon Subramania Iyer and Veeraraghavachariar, who ultimately became its proprietors.

The first issue of the weekly came out on September 20, 1878. There were letters of encouragement and congratulations from all parts of India. Warnings were not also lacking from those who saw the profession of a journalist as hazardous in the extreme. Nothing daunted, the two young men struggled valiantly to make the paper a success. G. Subramania Iyer, who in later years figured among the founders of many notable public institutions including the Indian National Congress, the Madras Mahajana Sabha, *The Madras Standard* and the Tamil paper *Swadesamitran,* was from the inception of *The Hindu* its Editor till he left it in September 1898. He was a powerful writer and had a remarkable capacity for marshalling facts and for presenting an argument trenchantly. He brought to the editorship of

the new journal the knowledge of a widely read scholar and the *elan* of a fervent patriot. He was assisted in his editorial labours by C. Karunakara Menon, K. Subba Row and K. Natarajan, all of whom were keen journalists who made a name for themselves later in life. Subramania Iyer's journalistic flair and profound knowledge of political and economic problems ensured the popularity of the paper. Many an abuse in the public services and the administration was vigorously exposed by him to be sooner or later corrected.

From the start, *The Hindu* had a well-wisher in an official of the Madras Government, Surgeon-Major Nicholson, who on seeing the first issue came seeking the Editor and printer. His frequent contributions added to the paper's prestige. Surgeon-Major Nicholson helped also to raise the literary standards of the paper.

In June 1880, that high-minded and liberal statesman, the Marquis of Ripon, became the Viceroy of India, and an era of happy relations between the ruler and the ruled was initiated. Ripon's predecessor, Lord Lytton, had followed a reactionary policy, and the regime of the new Viceroy came therefore as a balm to the people. Ripon repealed Lytton's notorious Vernacular Press Act which sought to muzzle the nascent Indian nationalist press.

In Madras, however, matters were taking a sombre turn. Although the new Viceroy was progressive and liberal, Madras had, from November 1881, a Governor who was a die-hard and a believer in the strong arm. Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff's regime as Governor was marked by a whole series of unpopular acts. He vetoed the Devasthanam Bill, though public opinion had welcomed it as a measure designed to improve the administration of religious endowments. Unpopular Collectors were shielded and officials of suspected or even proven misconduct

were let loose on the people. Developments like the Salem riots, which had caused considerable excitement among the people, were dealt with in utter disregard of the principles of civilized administration.

The growing tempo of public life in the country in the years following Lord Ripon's advent naturally stimulated public interest in news and *The Hindu* was read avidly by the intelligentsia. It was felt that the paper should be issued more frequently than once a week. It was converted into a tri-weekly from October 1, 1883. With the paper coming out thrice a week, the need for a press of its own was keenly felt, and the paper was shifted to 100, Mount Road, where a press styled the National Press was also set up. 100, Mount Road, remained *The Hindu's* premises for the next 55 years. It also became the meeting place of all the prominent political leaders in the City and the centre of nationalist activity.

The following year, 1884, was important in many ways for Madras and *The Hindu*. Towards the beginning of the year, Lord Ripon visited Madras and the City witnessed a series of unparalleled demonstrations in his honour. Later that year, the Madras Mahajana Sabha was formed under the presidentship of P. Rangayya Naidu, a leader of uncompromising patriotism. *The Hindu* building housed for a long time the office of the Mahajana Sabha.

In the Christmas week of 1885, the first session of the Indian National Congress was held at Bombay. The Madras contingent to the Congress was headed by S. Subramania Iyer, who had since the previous year taken a deep interest in *The Hindu* and by his advice and encouragement contributed in no small measure to the success of the undertaking.

Thus, in many ways, the offices of *The Hindu* became the focal point of political activity in Madras. It is not

surprising, therefore, that in British bureaucratic circles in Madras, 100, Mount Road, came to be described as "a den of conspirators", while among the general public *The Hindu* was looked upon as *The Thunderer* of Mount Road. (*The Thunderer* was the appellation given to *The Times* of London.)

Apart from issuing *The Hindu,* the National Press was at this time printing and circulating memorials and pamphlets by the thousands on various burning topics of the day. When the third session of the Indian National Congress met at Madras in 1887, *The Hindu* office turned out a large number of leaflets explaining the objects of the new organization.

The political awakening roused by the Madras session of the Congress led to heightened interest in politics and public affairs. As the demand for *The Hindu* grew, suggestions were made that it should be converted into a daily. The two proprietors were quick to respond and the first issue of *The Hindu* as a daily came out on January 1, 1889. The conduct of a daily newspaper, however, was no easy job. The circulation was small—not more than five or six thousand. Very many subscribers were in arrears but got their paper regularly as the management could not muster the courage to stop sending the paper lest they should lose the subscriber for good. Advertisement revenue was inconsiderable. European firms did not wish to support Indian-owned papers whose political opinions were not to their liking, and there was little or no advertising by Indian firms. Like many other papers of the day, *The Hindu* had to get along with periodical contributions from generous patrons who sympathized with its lot and desired to keep it going.

And when one such rich patron, the Maharaja of Vizianagaram, died suddenly in 1897, *The Hindu* ran into

financial difficulties. To add to its troubles, the Editor, G. Subramania Iyer, who had just returned after a visit to England to give evidence before the Welby Commission, felt so much disheartened by the state of the paper that he decided to withdraw from it. On September 28, 1898, the partnership between the two proprietors was dissolved, and M. Veeraraghavachariar was left in sole charge of the paper. G. Subramania Iyer's place as Editor was taken by C. Karunakara Menon, who had been Sub-Editor in the paper for ten years.

Although Veeraraghavachariar valiantly tried to conduct the paper in the new context, he too felt that it was time that something was done to put *The Hindu* on a stable foundation. The paper had been in existence for over twenty years and had earned the respect of the educated public as the authentic voice of nationalism in south India. Veeraraghavachariar was anxious that the paper should be carried on as a public trust and with this aim he decided to transfer the ownership to a public limited company with shares thrown open to the public. A joint stock company, The Hindu Limited, was floated on May 15, 1901, with the object of purchasing *The Hindu* and the National Press as a running concern. The capital of the company was Rs. 1,20,000 divided into 1,200 shares of Rs. 100 each. A Board of seven Directors drawn from the leading citizens of Madras was constituted. The Board consisted of P. Rangayya Naidu, the Chairman, Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao, Hon'ble Mr P. Anandacharlu, C. Jambulinga Mudaliar, C. Sankaran Nair and T. V. Seshagiri Iyer. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who had been Legal Adviser to *The Hindu* since 1895, continued as Legal Adviser to the concern. The management was in the hands of M. Veeraraghavachariar, who was Agent and Manager. The assets of *The Hindu* were estimated at Rs. 1,30,000 and

the liabilities at Rs. 1,00,000. The assets included the building, the press and the goodwill of the paper. The move to make *The Hindu* a public limited company was welcomed by everyone. Sister-papers like *The Madras Mail, The Madras Standard,* the *Mahratta* of Poona, the Lahore *Tribune* and many others wrote supporting the move. But the public response to the share-issue fell considerably short of what the promoters desired. Government servants were prohibited by an unsympathetic Government from taking any shares in the paper. With barely half the amount required available from subscriptions, the idea had to be abandoned.

Notwithstanding this disappointment, Veeraraghavachariar carried on the burdensome task of running the paper for some more years. In 1903, the Silver Jubilee of *The Hindu* was celebrated with great enthusiasm. The Jubilee celebrations showed the high esteem and influence which the paper commanded among the public, though the problem of finding an enduring solution to its financial worries remained.

It was in these circumstances that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who was aware of the financial position of *The Hindu* from the inside and who was also conscious of the place it had come to occupy in the public mind, conceived the bold idea of purchasing the paper on behalf of himself and a few friends and conducting the paper himself after relinquishing practice at the bar.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's decision to purchase and conduct a newspaper did not have the immediate approval of many of his relatives and friends. The one person whose advice he would have greatly valued, his eldest brother Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar, was no more. In the words of M. R. Narasimha Iyengar, "In this (the purchase of *The Hindu*) he acted much against the advice of many of his

relations and friends, and would not be persuaded to reconsider his decision. Apart from the fact that the profession of a journalist was highly hazardous in a country under foreign domination, the financial position of the paper was not encouraging. The previous administration during the last years of its tenancy was not able to command the services of an adequate and well-paid staff; its financial difficulties were overwhelming, its news service was antiquated, but it somehow muddled through and kept floating."

P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, speaking in retrospect, said in 1935: "One would have thought that the conduct of a daily newspaper was a somewhat hazardous enterprise on the part of one who had turned forty and who had not previously worked in the profession of journalism. But journalism had its attractions for Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. It supplied him with opportunities for serving the interests of the country in a manner which was most congenial to him. It was in the profession of journalism that he found his true *metier*."

CHAPTER 6

IN THE EDITORIAL CHAIR

When Kasturi Ranga Iyengar took over *The Hindu* on April, 1, 1905, his immediate concern was to reorganize the business set-up of the paper. He had in C. Karunakara Menon a seasoned journalist who had been with the paper for more than sixteen years and had been its Editor after G. Subramania Iyer had severed his connection with the paper. Karunakara Menon was made Joint Editor while Kasturi Ranga Iyengar assumed the Editorship.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar set himself the task of clearing up the financial affairs of the paper, which were none too good at the time. But within a month he had to take up the entire burden of editorial responsibilities. Karunakara Menon decided to resign from the paper and start his own daily *The Indian Patriot*, which in the circumstances was bound to be a rival to *The Hindu*. Accustomed to meeting every challenge frontally as it came, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar decided to take on the additional duties, which meant his giving up for good his practice at the bar. Many of his lawyer friends considered this a loss to the profession. But as P. S. Sivaswami Iyer once observed, the bar's loss was *The Hindu's* and journalism's gain.

Three months later, another problem confronted him. Veeraraghavachariar, the experienced manager of the paper, fell ill and had to retire. The day to day managerial responsibilty also fell on the shoulders of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. In search of an assistant to share part of his enlarged responsibilities, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar invited his nephew, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, who was then practising

as a lawyer at Tanjore, to join the paper as Assistant Editor and Manager. When we remember that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was past middle age at the time, and that the business he had taken over was full of risks, financial as well as personal, we can imagine the trials and tribulations of the first few months of his new life.

Conditions in 1905 were much different from those that had obtained in 1878 when the paper was started. In 1878, there was nothing like an organized public opinion and there was no Indian organ for its expression. There were a few European-owned (or "Anglo-Indian" as they were called) papers like *The Madras Mail* and *The Madras Times*. But these did not care for, much less reflect, Indian opinion. But by 1905, a vocal public opinion had been created. The feeling of nationalism had been roused in the country and was gaining in strength thanks to the policy of Lord Curzon in imposing the Partition of Bengal in defiance of public opinion. The agitation which was then started against the Partition helped to foster and stimulate the growth of national sentiment throughout the country. Moreover, political opinions were getting sharply differentiated in the country and controversies between the protagonists of different policies were being hotly debated in the press and on the platform.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar felt that one of the first improvements needed to make *The Hindu* meet the developing situation in the country was to strengthen its news services. He subscribed for a fuller service from Reuters, which was the sole news agency covering Indian and foreign affairs. He appointed correspondents in a number of places and welcomed telegraphic messages from active public workers in the various towns about political activities in their place. He gingered up the Correspondence column and made it a lively section of the paper for the free and ample ventilation

of public opinion on all current issues.

On the business side, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar sought to ensure the financial independence of the paper by stopping the practice of depending on donations or special subsidies from rulers of States and from other influential supporters. He put an end also to the practice of sending the paper to subscribers long after their subscriptions had ceased. Readers were reminded that they could not have the paper in future without sending their subscriptions in advance. Most defaulters promptly paid up. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar tightened up the general conduct of the paper all round and effected many economies. He worked so hard and effected such improvements that in a short time the paper came out of the red.

The Hindu in 1905, and for more than a decade after, was published in demifolio size, half the present standard size of newspapers. There were eighteen pages daily. The front page carried advertisements, and the last six or seven pages were totally devoted to advertisements. A few of the inner pages had both editorial matter and advertisements. As one opened the paper, the Letters-to-the-Editor column had pride of place on page 3. Normally there were four or five letters on different topics. On grave occasions, such as the failure of the Arbuthnot Bank, the riots at Tirunelveli and the controversy over the Theosophical Society's affairs, when one particular topic engrossed the attention of the readers, letters on the subject were collected and published in a second Correspondence column in a later page. Leading publicists of the day like Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao, Dewan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai and A. Sankariah were constant contributors to the Correspondence columns.

Daily features newly introduced included "The Calendar",

giving details from the almanac, "Shipping", giving the names of ships in the harbour and those expected, and "Weather" news from the official meteorologist. There were no regular magazine features or a magazine section, but extracts from Indian and foreign papers were offered liberally on political as well as literary topics. Book reviews were occasional and were published in the news columns. There was no financial page or column, but share prices were published once in a while. However, after the failure of the Arbuthnot Company late in 1906, share quotations began to be published more systematically. Court proceedings were reported regularly under the title "Legal", and proceedings in important cases were covered at some length. Similarly, coverage of important public meetings was fairly full, with the speeches of the more important speakers being carried *ipsissima verba.* Debates and statements in the British Parliament on India were covered quite extensively, and these generally figured under the familiar caption "India in Parliament".

Among the features which were peculiar to those days was the system of announcing in the columns of the paper itself editorial decisions on contributions received for publication. The Editor's replies appeared under the title "Notice to Correspondents" as in the following: " 'The Reformer'—Authenticate. 'A Sufferer', 'G.S.A.', 'One Who Is Concerned'—Declined with thanks.' " Notices to subscribers acknowledging receipt of subscriptions were also a regular feature of the paper at the time. There were not many news agents in the mofussil and most copies were sent to subscribers by post.

It is interesting to note that despite the preoccupation with national politics, the editorials in the paper ranged over a very wide field. In one typical week, for instance, in 1905, the editorials were on the following topics: "The

S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar

Travancore Popular Assembly", "Mr Gokhale in England", "Lord Curzon's Last Tour", "Fruit Industries for India", "Imports and Exports of Japan", "Archaeology in Madras", and "The Zemstivo Congress in Russia".

In national politics Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was in sympathy with the active policies of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and this was reflected in an editorial note written the day after he took over the editorial reins. Referring to a plea for the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee to inquire into the working of the Government of India, he wrote on May 2, 1905: "Sir William Wedderburn, we know, has repeatedly expressed the same opinion. Well, without questioning the wisdom of these genial friends of India we may say that we do not feel quite convinced that good results will follow from these inquiries. Our past experience of these inquiries is not very encouraging. The results of the inquiry conducted by the Royal Commission, which the Liberal Ministry of 1885 appointed, utterly failed to fulfil our expectations. The fact is, the Indian people must rely entirely on themselves to obtain redress for their deep and numerous wrongs. They alone are the best judges of their grievances and their causes. Relying on their own exertions, and in a voice ever growing in unity and strength, they must demand in no whispers or murmurs, but in fearless terms and full of determination, the fulfilment of the pledges and promises that our British rulers have repeatedly made, and the rights that the British Constitution and British traditions have unmistakably guaranteed."

The initial apathy of the people towards the Swadeshi movement, started as a counter to the Partition of Bengal, came in for trenchant criticism in an editorial on February 13, 1906: "Nearly a month has elapsed since the Madras delegates (to the Congress session) returned to their homes

and though among these delegates was almost every one of the oldest and most prominent Congressmen of Southern India, we have seen no indication of their zeal in the cause of Swadeshi having survived its first fit. After nearly a quarter of a century of experience in discharging the burden of public duty, we have arrived at the conviction that the attitude of humble suppliants before exalted officials for the favour of and mercy of Government is not the most honourable or paying one; but that, understanding our own conditions and wants clearly and definitely, to rely on our own exertions and effect our own regeneration is the true and the only effective method. We tried the former method and the result was the injuries, insults and the humiliations which a self-willed autocrat was able to inflict on us. On the other hand, the second method which approves itself to all manly and thoughtful natures is bound to succeed, if not in the immediate future, in the long course of our nation's existence. A foreign domination works a double evil on the nation subject to it: it makes laws and levies taxes as it likes, without regard for the opinions or feelings of the people; and, secondly, side by side with this political emasculation, it brings about the industrial prostration of the subject people. Of this twofold evil, the latter is by far the worse and the more formidable and more far-reaching in its consequences."

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was one of the first to emphasize going to the people to educate them politically and make the country strong. "The common idea, at least among our rulers is," he wrote, "that our Congresses and conferences are carried on merely by the English educated classes, the school-masters, the lawyers and journalists. They do not believe that the masses of the people take any intelligent interest. But it is not true now. Every intelligent villager is familiar with the politics of the Congress. He fully

understands its aims and methods and he feels no difficulty in rendering it every help he can. But he shares the effects of climate and tradition, and consequently his interest is more often passive than active. What is necessary to change this passive attitude of his and stimulate his zeal and enthusiasm? An annual Congress in some distant corner of a province, however much it may excite momentary interest, does not exert a steady, permanent influence." After stressing the need for intensive mass contact in every nook and corner of the Presidency, the editorial urged: "We can realize more or less how much more service the Madras Mahajana Sabha can do if it has branches all over the Presidency to furnish it with timely information about local conditions." Not very long after, the formation of Congress Committees at district, *taluk* and village levels achieved the same purpose.

After the first few months of his taking over of *The Hindu,* Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had to face a situation which more or less forced him to become the sole owner of the paper. Friends who had assisted him when he bought the concern with the intention of becoming partners, changed their minds for one reason or the other. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar decided to accept C. Sankaran Nair's advice that it was best that the paper should be completely in the hands of one man. He managed to arrange for the return of the amounts paid by the others, out of resources which luckily he could raise at the time. Though the first year of his ownership proved strenuous and taxing, he had the satisfaction of finding that the year closed with a small profit, a bare hundred and fifty rupees. He had picked up fast the economics of newspaper production and felt confident that with the paper's undisputed popularity and esteem, he

could face its future with confidence. The personality of the new Editor and the independence, vigour and freshness he was infusing into the policy and writings of the paper were having their effect on its progress and thus ensuring its financial success.

CHAPTER 7

THE ARBUTHNOT CRASH

In October 1906, a few days before the joyous festival of Deepavali, a tragedy of the first magnitude struck thousands of homes in south India. The famous century-old banking firm of Arbuthnot & Co failed without a warning. It closed its shutters on a fateful Monday morning and spelt in that act the ruin of thousands of depositors who had put their savings in the bank. For months after the event, the crash cast its dark shadow over the Presidency.

Arbuthnot & Co was the premier business house in south India, with an unrivalled reputation. Banking was the Company's primary business, though other kinds of business were undertaken by a sister firm called Arbuthnot Industrials. For generations, Arbuthnots had been the leading private bankers in south India, as well as the leading house in trade. Their clientele, estimated at over 8,000 in number, was so wide and so large that no other private bank in any part of India could stand comparison with Arbuthnots in the number and amount of current and deposit accounts. No account was too large for them, none too small. Ruling princes deposited their money in lakhs, while poor widows and orphans kept their small savings with the bank against a rainy day. Charitable funds were largely invested with them. Arbuthnots had, in short, earned the reputation of being as good as the Bank of England.

In the City of Madras, Sir George Arbuthnot, the chief partner of the firm, was a highly respected citizen, with a

rank second only to that of the Governor of the Presidency. Sir George was a flamboyant figure who used to ride in his coach and four to attend public functions and was the cynosure of all eyes. He was a nominated member of the Madras Legislative Council. Other Arbuthnots were also prominent in various walks of life and occupied influential positions.

Arbuthnot & Co and its subsidiaries employed over 12,000 persons, mostly Indians, paying them annually not less than Rs. 10 lakhs in wages and salaries. Madras was its headquarters, but there was a branch in London under the control of a senior partner of the firm. Its total deposits ran into several crores of rupees.

It was a firm of this immense size, far-flung operations and established reputation that crashed all on a sudden. It was not as if those running the firm did not know what was coming. As a matter of fact, the calamity was of their own making, especially of the two principal partners, Sir George Arbuthnot and P. MacFadyen, both of whom, as it was later discovered, had misappropriated crores of rupees belonging to the firm. When the day of reckoning came, one of them, MacFadyen, committed suicide, while Sir George posed as a thoroughly innocent victim of circumstances beyond his control.

The Hindu spearheaded the move to expose the fraud and bring the criminals to book. It launched a crusade in its editorial and correspondence columns, bringing to light each day varied pieces of information to solve the jigsaw puzzle that was the Company's affairs, and trying to safeguard for the benefit of the unfortunate depositors as much of the remaining assets of the firm as could be salvaged from the wreckage.

Arbuthnot & Co announced suspension of business on Monday, October 22, 1906. But even as late as the previous

Saturday, the bank had been receiving deposits and issuing cheques in payment. It was later proved in court that Sir George Arbuthnot and his assistants in the bank knew full well that they were closing down on Monday, that they could not repay the deposits that were being accepted, and that the cheques that were being issued by them on Saturday would not be honoured on Monday.

On Saturday, there had been great commotion in Madras City following wild rumours that Messrs Arbuthnot & Co had met with serious difficulties and contemplated suspension of payments. On Monday morning, a Reuter message was received from London that Messrs P. MacFadyen & Co, who were running the London office of Messrs Arbuthnot & Co, had suspended payment.

An anxious crowd gathered opposite the premises of the bank in Madras on Monday morning, hoping against hope that all was well with Arbuthnots. To their shock, the Manager put up a notice on the outer door of the bank stating that the Company regretted that they had had to suspend payment. Panic seized the assembled depositors. To most of them the closing of the bank spelt stark ruin.

An application was filed in the High Court on behalf of Messrs Arbuthnot & Co to declare the Company insolvent. It was represented in the petition that the main cause of the insolvency was the failure of the London office of the firm, which had stopped payment; additional causes were the unexpected withdrawal of large sums of money held by the firm in deposit in Madras, and the lock-up of the bulk of its funds in investments which were not immediately realizable and some of which had heavily depreciated in value. The petition was admitted and six weeks' time was granted to the Company to file a schedule of its assets and liabilities. Meanwhile, the properties of

the firm were ordered to vest in the Official Assignee.

Tuesday, October 23, brought the news that P. MacFadyen, the leading partner of the firm in England, had committed suicide. MacFadyen was believed to have held the master-key to the affairs of the firm, and his suicide came as a further shock to the bewildered depositors. The mystery as to who precisely was responsible for the failure deepened as the inquiry in the High Court into the petition for insolvency was taken up. It was getting clear that money deposited with the firm had been misused, and that while the London partner had blamed the Madras firm for the failure, the Madras partner blamed the London firm for the crash. It was later to be proved that there were swindlers at both ends.

As these dubious dealings became public, it was apprehended that there might be attempts to secrete some of the assets of the company. *The Hindu* voiced the general concern: "The immediate step to be taken is to find out and to secure all the assets and properties of the firm. This requires great care and circumspection, and must be done without loss of time." It also complained that the local Government had not done anything to alleviate the distress caused by such a huge calamity as this.

The Official Assignee appointed by the Court to handle the affairs of the Arbuthnot firm was a European, who seemed to be more concerned to protect the prestige of Europeans in general than to ensure justice. Naturally his role in the whole proceedings came under suspicion. On November 3, *The Hindu* pointed out that "the Official Assignee has notified his intention to dispense with the services of the establishment of the Company", that "several of the assistants, including the Manager, have overdrawn large sums to their credit", and that in spite of this the

Manager Mr. Peebles was being retained by the Official Assignee on a salary of Rs. 1,000 a month; "If this be true" said *The Hindu,* "the extent of the Official Assignee's patronage may be inferred, though his wisdom in exercising it in this manner may be open to doubt."

Stung by the criticism of Government's inaction, the Governor, Sir Arthur Lawley, who was himself one of the victims of the bank's failure, agreed to open a fund to relieve urgent cases of distress resulting from the crash.

At this distance of time, it may be difficult to imagine the courage and tenacity that an Indian newspaper required to champion a cause against interests which had the direct or indirect backing of the European community. Indian Editors in those days ran the risk not only of falling foul of those in authority but also of being maligned by their European-owned contemporaries who never missed an opportunity to support the Government and condemn the Indian-owned press. *The Madras Times* and *The Madras Mail,* two papers owned and edited by Europeans, found fault with Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's efforts to secure justice for the constituents of the bank. They painted his attempts in the darkest colours and alleged that he was trying to rouse the fury of the local people against the Whites. *The Hindu* made a dignified but spirited reply to these critics : "At the risk of seeming wearisome to some of our readers, and of incurring the further displeasure of some worthy members of the Anglo-Indian community who detect in our action sinister designs of arousing racial animosity, we have to recur to the subject of the insolvency of Arbuthnot & Co again and again. The degree of misery and excitement which it has caused among the public will be apparent upon a perusal of our Correspondence columns from day to day....Be the creditors Indian or European, it is the common interest of all to sift the whole

matter to the bottom and to find out the true cause of the collapse of this firm which has involved so many families in ruin."

Although more than a month had passed since the firm closed its doors, the public was left in the dark as to the exact position of the Company's assets and liabilities. Finally, when the Official Assignee filed a statement on the position of the firm, it became clear that deliberate and persistent fraud had been perpetrated by the directors of the firm over a long period of time. The Official Assignee's statement revealed that none of the many partners of the Company had brought in any capital of his own, and that because of several dubious operations extending over many years, the Company had been insolvent for several years. According to the auditors appointed by the Official Assignee, the liabilities of the firm stood at roughly Rs. 277.5 lakhs, while the assets amounted roughly to Rs. 76 lakhs. This appalling disclosure stirred Kasturi Ranga Iyengar to a white heat of indignation, and he wrote on November 19, 1906 : "..for a dozen years now, the business of Messrs Arbuthnot & Co has been a swindle of the vilest description. The firm has kept on a banking business under false pretences, decoying innumerable innocent men and women into investing in its rapacious maw all their hard-earned savings and earnings, moneys which the members of the firm could have had no reasonable prospect of repaying in full. How many widows, orphans, old pensioners, Government officials and others have been lured into the net of the pretended pompousness of this firm, to deposit their moneys in, not knowing that Messrs Arbuthnot & Co was but a whited sepulchre?....

"In a speech which he delivered in the Legislative Council in 1904, we find Sir George declaiming against himself and others like him being called 'birds of passage'.

He said: 'Are firms like my own, and I quote my own merely as one instance among many others, are we, who have been honourably connected with and carrying on business here in Madras for over 100 years, which employ as we do, over 12,000 persons, of whom 95 per cent are Indians, and pay annually in wages and salaries not less than 10 lakhs of rupees, are we to be told that we are birds of passage taking no real interest in Indian affairs and having no real stake in the country? The thing is absurd.' The unblushing effrontery and unscrupulous character of these statements will now stand out as a revelation to the public. Under existing circumstances, Sir George Arbuthnot and men of his calibre are, we think, more truly described as 'birds of prey' than as 'birds of passage'."

In another editorial (November 26, 1906) *The Hindu* again referred to Government's inaction regarding the Arbuthnot affairs and said: "We hope that the Madras Government, who have shown, if we may say so, a somewhat serene indifference to the scandalous disclosures which have been made, will take steps to see that Sir George Arbuthnot and other responsible with him for the business of Arbuthnot & Co and its collapse, are arraigned before a criminal tribunal and placed upon their defence. This is a measure required in the interests of good administration, to keep unimpaired the confidence of the people in British law and British justice, and to prove beyond cavil that the law administered in this country is no respecter of persons, will deal even-handed justice to all sections of the community."

V. Krishnaswami Iyer, the eminent lawyer and politician of those days, took a leading role in exposing in Court the misdeeds of Sir George Arbuthnot. With the assistance

of some youthful volunteers, he went through the ramifications of the accounts of Arbuthnot & Co and prepared several points for clarification.

Sir George's application for a declaration of insolvency was taken up by the High Court on March 25, 1907. The case came up for hearing before Mr Justice S. Subramania Iyer. A leading European barrister, Mr Napier, appeared for Sir George. V. Krishnaswami Iyer wanted to appear for the creditors. But in those days only barristers could appear in solvency cases. However, the astute Krishnaswami Iyer discovered a way out. He found that every creditor had the right in law personally to cross-examine the applicant. So he took off his gown, and as an aggrieved creditor of the firm that he was, he cross-examined Sir George for over two weeks so thoroughly that it was proven that a number of criminal charges could be laid at Sir George's door.

The major charges related to falsification of accounts, misappropriating the bank's funds by transferring them to his own private account, not having proper entries for some huge sums that were deposited in the bank, transferring shares worth a lakh and a half of rupees to the name of his son-in-law, transferring £8,680 in cash to his wife and Rs. 30,000 in debentures to his sister in England, and not accounting for Rs. 5,55,764 shown in his account. It was revealed in cross-examination that Sir George had deliberately destroyed all correspondence of value that might incriminate him.

Mr Justice Subramania Iyer found Sir George Arbuthnot guilty of a number of criminal offences and committed him to the Sessions. In the Sessions Court, the well-known barrister, Eardley Norton, defended Sir George. Despite Mr Norton's able advocacy, the case against Sir George was so conclusive that an all-white jury could not help

returning a verdict of guilty. Sir George was sentenced by the Chief Justice, Sir Arnold White, to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment.

The Hindu pointed out that of the three crore rupees "entombed" in the Arbuthnot failure, "not a pie in the rupee has so far been seen by the creditors". Welcoming the sentence on Sir George Arbuthnot, *The Hindu* said: "It would have been a scandal of the gravest kind in the administration of justice if the chief partners of this firm had escaped condign punishment for their grave crime of deluding and defrauding the investing public." Though many of the hidden resources of the Company were brought to light, these did not amount to much in the aggregate, and the depositors had to suffer the loss of the bulk of their savings.

The punishment of the guilty was only one aspect of the Arbuthnot crash as far as *The Hindu* was concerned. It wanted also to play a constructive role. One of the correspondents who had written on the Arbuthnot crash, Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao, an eminent publicist of the day, expressed the view that a lesson of the Arbuthnot failure was that they must have a national bank of their own, a bank which could be controlled by people here. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar wrote in support of this suggestion. The seed sown by R. Raghunatha Rao was fostered with care by V. Krishnaswami Iyer. At the latter's instance, a meeting of persons interested in starting a swadeshi bank on modern lines was held in Krishnaswami Iyer's house in Luz, Mylapore, on November 3. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was among those present. The idea found support from many other quarters, and the Indian Bank was registered on March 5, 1907. It was a public limited company with a share capital of 20 lakhs of rupees, divided into 20,000 shares of Rs. 100 each.

The Arbuthnot failure was a good lesson to Indians, said *The Hindu* in an editorial on August 22, under the title "Safe Investments". Pleading for the diversion of Indian savings into national industrial undertakings, it said: "The misery that has been caused by the failure of Arbuthnot & Co and the hopeless indebtedness into which it has thrown many individuals ought to be an object lesson to future investors . . . That such large amounts should have been invested in such unregistered companies is a striking commentary on our own want of credit. While an English company was readily able to inspire confidence among Indians, the Indians themselves, unable to appreciate the advantage of union and co-operation, were all the while helping foreigners to exploit the resources of far-off countries. . . . But if one phenomenon is now more apparent in India than another, it is the sincere desire felt by a large majority to improve our arts and industries and help the material advancement of our country. This has undoubtedly led to some noteworthy efforts. The establishment in Bengal of a Technical Institute, the increase in the number of handlooms throughout India, the formation of a few Indian banks, the coming into being of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company, and the maturing of the Tata Iron and Steel Company are some of the new ventures which owe their origin to the gratifying tendency noted above."

It was out of such stirrings of national consciousness that swadeshi industrial enterprise was born.

CHAPTER 8

THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT

In the political evolution of India after 1857, Lord Curzon's imposition of the Partition of Bengal in the teeth of popular opposition in 1905 marks a sharp dividing line, From that moment a new force arose in the country the logical culmination of which could only be the complete freedom of the country. Lord Curzon's decision roused the country and stirred her to stout defiance with one voice from the Cape to the Himalayas. The days of petitions and prayers to the British were numbered. A new spirit of self-reliance and national assertiveness was manifesting itself of which Tilak soon became the embodiment and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, B. C. Pal and others the vigorous exponents.

The Partition of Bengal was, according to official apologists, a move to ensure greater efficiency in administration. The old Presidency of Bengal included Bihar and Assam also and it was felt that such a large area was administratively unwieldy. Proposals for partition had been considered before Lord Curzon's time also, but had been dropped because of hostile public opinion. Lord Curzon, however, revived the scheme, and in his own autocratic way pushed it through official channels for approval. For a time the fate of the scheme seemed uncertain and there was a faint hope that the Secretary of State for India might veto it. But in July 1905, the Secretary of State gave his assent to the proposal.

The new province of East Bengal was so demarcated as to be a Muslim-majority province. It was this communal basis underlying the Partition plan that provoked general

resentment. For centuries Hindus and Muslims in Bengal had lived in amity, and the move to introduce the communal virus through partition was vehemently opposed. It was felt that the communal idea would be fatal to the political progress of the country. Even some of the European-owned papers were unwilling to support partition, but Lord Curzon was determined to have his way.

Bengal was stirred to its depths. Meetings were held all over the province to condemn the move. The people wanted to show their resentment in some effective form which would ruffle the obduracy of the rulers. Resolutions were passed at many meetings urging positive action to lend an edge to the people's protest. It was in this atmosphere that the idea of boycott of British goods took shape. On August 7, 1905, a huge public meeting was held in the Calcutta Town Hall which passed a resolution fully endorsing the view voiced in meetings in the mofussil that the people should abstain from the use of British manufactures so long as the Partition decision of the Government was not withdrawn. The natural corollary of this decision was the encouragement of Indian manufactures. Boycott of British goods and the promotion of Swadeshi became the watchwords of the new movement. A militant nationalism was growing under the ringing slogan, *Bande Mataram.*

The Partition of Bengal was officially enforced on 16th October, 1905. The reaction of the people, whose protests had been so insultingly ignored, was swift and sweeping. The day of Partition was observed as a day of mourning and penance, and people everywhere took an anti-Partition pledge. In Calcutta, there was a complete *hartal.* From early morning till noon thousands upon thousands of people, Hindus and Muslims, assembled on the banks of the Hooghly, took a bath in the sacred waters uttering the slogan, *Bande Mataram,* and tied the traditional *rakhi*

threads round one another's wrists, signifying brotherhood and promise of help in times of peril. Never had Calcutta witnessed such a mass demonstration of public feeling against the foreign ruler. In the afternoon, thousands of persons congregated at a function for laying the foundation-stone of Federation Hall, a place meant to be the meeting-house of nationalists. The following public pledge was taken by the huge concourse, the pledge being translated into Bengali by poet Rabindranath Tagore: "Whereas the Government has thought fit to effect the Partition of Bengal in spite of the universal protest of the Bengali nation, we hereby pledge and proclaim that we, as a people, shall do everything in our power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of our Province and to maintain the integrity of our race. So help us God!"

The agitation that started in Bengal found a ready echo in every part of the country. Curzon's attempt to divide a province had only served to unite all India. "Lord Curzon will go down to posterity as the maker of the Indian nation," said *Bengalee,* Surendranath Banerjea's paper.

The Hindu wrote: "The Partition scheme has been an instrument in the hand of Providence to make us a nation, to unite the classes with the masses, and to inspire them with a new sense of nationality and devotion to the mother-land." Quick to sense that the agitation against Partition marked the beginning of a new era for the country, it said: "Is there any Indian in any part of India whose bosom does not heave with emotion and hope on reflecting on the signs of the new-born patriotism in evidence at the present moment everywhere, from one end of the country to the other? For over twenty years, the moribund forces of national revivification have been struggling into fresh birth, and today we behold the inspiring and awful spectacle of a great and ancient people stirred into a noble selfconsciousness

and realizing in their own hopeful and buoyant minds the new turn that their history is taking. India is on the eve of a new epoch in the history of her national career....

"For fifty years, our leaders and their humble lieutenants have toiled on the field of politics in the hope that the mighty and enlightened nation to whose custody the destiny of their country is entrusted, would fulfil its promise and gradually raise it to a state of dignity and status, to a state of expanding liberty and growing self-respect. Their toil has not been indeed altogether fruitless; but, on the whole, the result has been certainly disappointing. The failure of our efforts in the past to reach our ends through political liberty having failed, the conviction is dawning on our minds that a more certain means of reaching them is to bring about a material upheaval, thereby filling the national mind with greater hopefulness and more self-confidence and bringing to our struggle the invaluable strength of abundant material resources.... We have certainly not lost sight of our political ends, but we try to open for ourselves a new path along which we believe the Promised Land might be reached in a shorter time and with less solid obstacles .... Twenty years of reactionary Government and the persistent efforts of Lord Curzon to weaken the foundation of our national life and to blast our national hopes have brought home to us the importance of self-help and self-reliance in the making of a prosperous and progressive Indian nation."

A powerful expression of Swadeshi activity in South India was the starting of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company at Tuticorin in 1906. Inspired by V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, the nationalist leader of Tuticorin, the S.S.N.C. came into being as a joint-stock company on November 12, 1906. The Company was formed with a capital of Rs. 10 lakhs, divided into 40,000 shares of Rs. 25 each. The

shares were issued on the specific condition that they would be held exclusively by the nationals of India, Ceylon and other countries of Asia. The objects of the Company were to facilitate travel and trade as well as to establish a cheap and reliable steamer service between Tuticorin and Colombo to start with, which was to be extended to other places later on. The encouragement of navigation and imparting of practical training in ship-building, and the establishment of schools for instruction in the repair and maintenance of ships, were among the other objects of the Company.

Welcoming the new Swadeshi venture, *The Hindu* urged the people to extend their whole-hearted support to the new Company: "We cannot speak too highly of the objects and aims of the Company to popularize the art of navigation to our countrymen. The Company proposes to establish schools for teaching our countrymen the theory and art of navigation and ship-building. This is one of the greatest national wants at the present, and in whatever humble and limited scale the Company may succeed in supplying it, it shall have the remarkable credit for having been the pioneer in that direction. . . . We trust that our patriotic countrymen will consider it their duty to co-operate and promote the laudable objects of the Company as best they may."

The birth of this new Swadeshi enterprise was looked upon with no small hatred by the European vested interests who had a monopoly of the shipping business at the time. To them the new entrepreneurs were interlopers, and they were determined to adopt any means to ruin the efforts of the new-comers. The Government, which was morally responsible for the development of Indian industry, played a dubious role. While professing sympathy for Indian industry and even promising active support to all legitimate endeavours to promote the development of indigenous

industry, their active sympathies were with the monopolists of British capital. Whenever competition arose between British vested interests and new-born Indian enterprise, the British officials could not help siding with the British interests. That out of the economic struggle political clashes were bound to develop became clear enough as Indian enterprise developed. To what lengths the British interests were prepared to go to stifle a national enterprise was demonstrated in the case of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company and the tribulations of its heroic founder, which form a glorious chapter in the annals of south India.

CHAPTER 9

THE TIRUNELVELI RIOTS

Tuticorin in the Tirunelveli district in south Madras was during the days of the Swadeshi movement a storm-centre of political activity thanks to the leadership of V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, a lawyer of the town who had shot into prominence with the founding of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company.

Tuticorin was a second-class port, and steamers called at the port for taking passengers and cargo to Colombo. Cattle were shipped in large numbers to Colombo and the trade in cattle was an important part of shipping activity.

In the early years of this century, the coastal shipping service between Tuticorin and Colombo was the monopoly of the British India Steam Navigation Company, a British concern. The B.I.S.N. was running a highly profitable service between Tuticorin and Colombo. There was a standing complaint that the Company was not providing proper facilities to Indian merchants while favouring the European traders in Tuticorin.

The Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company was formed by Chidambaram Pillai and others to break the British monopoly and also to enable India to develop her own mercantile marine. Leading merchants of Tuticorin were among the patrons of the new Company, and it was felt that a new day was dawning for Indian trade. While the Swadeshi Company was making arrangements to procure ships for its service, the Shah Lines of Bombay, an Indian concern, was encouraged to start a competitive service in Tuticorin. The advent of an Indian rival on the scene led

to sharp business practice on the part of the British Company and to frequent clashes between the agents and officials of the two companies. The competition became keener still later when the ships of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company were put in commission. The Swadeshi Company was able to provide shipping-space in time to Indian traders, and its facilities for passengers and cargo were superior to those offered by the British Company. The rates of the Swadeshi Company were competitive, and Indian merchants had the added satisfaction of encouraging an Indian enterprise. The British Company lost heavily in traffic and was keen to regain its position somehow. It started a rate-war, cutting down its freight rates to such ludicrous levels that at one stage it offered free trips to passengers if only they would travel in the British ships. The British Company had one advantage over its Swadeshi rival. The British officials in Tirunelveli district were invariably on its side. The partiality shown by the Sub-Magistrate of Tuticorin, a Mr Waller, was a flagrant example of racialism in action. He sent out a secret circular to all officials under his jurisdiction advising them to dissuade people from travelling in the Swadeshi ships. European officials of the port, for their part, on some pretext or other, harassed the Swadeshi ship-master and delayed the departure of their ships so that the British ships could start ahead. Other officials of the district like the Sub-Collector, Mr Ashe, and the District Magistrate and Collector, Mr Wynch, contributed their own share of harassment.

While the shipping war was going on, there was another development in the town of Tuticorin which again raged the authorities and the people in opposite camps. In February 1908, there was a strike in a local British-owned textile mill, the Coral Mills. The workers demanded increased wages as the mill was making huge profits and

declaring a dividend of 60 per cent. The cause of the workers was taken up by Chidambaram Pillai, who had long been interested in labour welfare. The workers were able to gain the sympathy of the public of Tuticorin, and relief-centres were started by public subscription for the feeding of the strikers. Meanwhile, Chidambaram Pillai was negotiating with the mill management on the strikers' behalf and kept the workers informed of the course of negotiations by addressing a public meeting every day. The meetings were addressed by Chidambaram Pillai and his co-workers, Subramania Siva and Padmanabha Iyengar. Subramania Siva was a *sanyasin* who had taken to preaching Swadeshi and the boycott of foreign goods and institutions. He was a fiery orator. In their speeches at these meetings, which were attended by the public as well as the workers, Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva, used to plead for unity and courage as essential to the success of their cause.

Thanks to the reasonable attitude adopted by Chidambaram Pillai, the strike in the mill was settled amicably to the satisfaction of both the workers and the management. But the mill authorities were afraid of Chidambaram Pillai's growing popularity. Just at this time a new Sub-Collector, Mr Ashe, was posted to Tuticorin. The Agent of the British Indian Steam Navigation Company and the British merchants of the mill lost no time in prejudicing his mind against Chidambaram Pillai. Unless something was done to check Chidambaram Pillai who was gaining in popularity, they said, there would be a challenge to the Government's authority in the entire district. This was a malicious distortion of facts, for though Chidambaram Pillai was a popular hero, he had no intention of subverting the Government.

On March 9, 1908, celebrations were planned to be

held all over India to mark the release of the great nationalist leader Bepin Chandra Pal. At Tuticorin and at Tirunelveli, the district headquarters, public celebrations were being arranged by Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva. A free public dispensary and a free reading-room were to be opened in honour of Bepin Chandra Pal and there was to be a public meeting later on.

Two days prior to the celebrations, on March 7, the District Collector, Mr Wynch, advised by the Sub-Collector, Mr Ashe, informed Chidambaram Pillai that he must not conduct the celebrations or participate in any public meeting. He was further advised to leave Tuticorin immediately. A threat was held out that unless he kept away as advised, he would be arrested. In answer to this affront, Chidambaram Pillai sent word that it was not possible to call off the celebrations and that he was prepared to face the consequences of his actions.

The Collector, thereupon, issued an order prohibiting public demonstrations and the assembly of more than four persons, and also launched security proceedings against Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Siva and Padmanabha Iyengar. They were asked to show cause why they should not be ordered to execute security bonds for good behaviour. Summons were issued to them to appear in the Court of the District Magistrate at Tirunelveli on the morning of March 9, the day fixed for the celebrations. Chidambaram Pillai explained to the public the action of the authorities at a meeting held on March 8.

On March 9, the District Magistrate took up the case at Tirunelveli. The hearings went on for some days, and on March 12, there were surprising developments. The District Magistrate asked the three leaders if they admitted the charges contained in the notices served on them. The accused denied the charges, and they were immediately

remanded to custody. The leaders said that they were ready to give the securities as demanded, but the District Magistrate said that the Court could not accept the securities since they had not accepted the charges made against them !

Following the remand order, the three leaders were taken in three horse-drawn carriages to the district jail.

The big crowd that had gathered outside the Court was taken aback when it saw how the leaders were being dealt with. Shouting *Vande Mataram,* the crowd tried to follow the carriages for some distance. The sudden arrest of the leaders left the crowd leaderless, and the resentful mob did not know what to do.

That evening passed off quietly, but next morning, on March 13, rioting broke out in Tirunelveli. Shops observed a *hartal,* students went on strike and workers came out in the streets. A riotous mob roamed the streets of the town, set fire to the Municipal Office, a Government office and a police station. The municipal oil-storage tank was set ablaze.

The Sub-Collector came out of his office and planting himself in front of the advancing mob, without any warning, fired into it. Four persons died on the spot. The crowd retaliated by throwing stones and a police inspector was injured.

The riots continued for three days. Processions were taken out daily demanding the release of Chidambaram Pillai and the other leaders.

News of the death of four men in the firing at Tirunelveli led to rioting at Tuticorin and Tachanallur. At Tuticorin the Sub-Collector ordered a *lathi* charge and firing on a procession. Tension ran so high that many European residents of Tuticorin spent the nights in a British ship anchored off the port.

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When rioting broke out at Tirunelveli, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar deputed a special correspondent to cover the situation. His despatches were followed day by day with great interest by the public of south India. *The Hindu* also published letters from eminent local men of Tuticorin and Tirunelveli throwing light on the causes of the disturbances. All correspondents agreed that the sudden removal of the leaders had incensed the public and led to some rioting but, even so, damage had been done only to property. It was only when the District Magistrate had whipped an innocent person that the crowd had started attacking the police. The basic cause of the events, everyone agreed, was the antipathy of the British merchants in Tuticorin to the successful running of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company. Opinion was universal that the authorities had been spurred to take whatever action they had taken only at the instigation of the British merchants.

The Hindu wrote on March 16, 1908: "In the first place, there was no reasonable ground for taking the criminal proceedings which were taken by the District Magistrate against Mr Chidambaram Pillai and the two others. A dispassionate examination of all the proceedings relating to the Coral Mills strike must convince all reasonable men that, whatever may have been the origin of the strike, Mr Chidambaram Pillai was principally instrumental in bringing the strikers to a reasonable frame of mind and to agree to a settlement. The authorities seem to have been bent upon venting their wrath upon his head notwithstanding this result. They issued notices to him forbidding him to hold any public meeting or processions in connection with B. C. Pal's release and thereafter instituted criminal proceedings requiring him to keep the peace. The acts of persecution to which he was subjected in the course of the inquiry, culminating in sending him to jail, show a

flagrant attitude on the part of the authorities that they were determined to harass him in all possible ways, even in violation of law and justice."

The Hindu also asked whether the police had followed the standing instructions in regard to firing, which called for a warning to the crowd before firing was resorted to : "It is extremely questionable whether these instructions were carried out in the present instance. The matter is one requiring a careful and thorough investigation, and we hope the Government will deal with it in the right spirit."

But the Government were in no mood to deal with the situation "in the right spirit". When Chidambaram Pillai and the other two leaders appealed to the High Court against their detention, the High Court accepted their appeal and directed their release on their executing security bonds as originally demanded of them. The District Collector, however, could not countenance the release of Chidambaram Pillai. He immediately moved the Government and obtained its sanction to prosecute Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva on charges of sedition. The District Magistrate also took action against six leading advocates of Tuticorin and Tirunelveli, suspected to be supporters of Chidambaram Pillai and the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company, demanding from them security for good behaviour. The Sub-Collector also visited the offices of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company and threatened the employees there with dire consequences.

This reign of terror perturbed the local leaders and a deputation under a moderate leader of Tirunelveli waited on the Governor of Madras. The Governor, Sir Arthur Lawley, threw all the blame on Chidambaram Pillai and advised the deputationists in so many words to mind their own business. Disturbed by the Governor's attitude, *The Hindu* reiterated that it was the authorities and not

Chidambaram Pillai who were to blame. It said: "All the facts which have hitherto come out, and the written memorandum of the Deputation, place beyond doubt the fact that the disturbances neither at Tuticorin nor at Tirunelveli can be traced to any speeches made. . . . If the magistrate and the police had not meddled in the matter, everything would have gone on quietly as was the case in numerous places in the country."

While the Tuticorin sedition cases and the Advocates' Security Demand case were going on, Mr Ashe, the Sub-Collector, who was primarily responsible for all the trouble, was transferred, and this seemed to have a calming effect on the local situation. The first result of the advent of a new Sub-Collector was the dropping of the security proceedings against the six advocates. Recalling the attitude of Mr Ashe, *The Hindu* said: " . . . it affords a strong illustration of the evil of the executive and judicial functions being combined in the same officer."

Another instance of how justice was meted out in those days was the judgment delivered in the sedition cases against Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva. The Additional Sessions Judge, Mr Pinhey, who was deputed to try the case, found both Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva guilty. Chidambaram Pillai was sentenced to forty years' penal servitude on two counts, while Subramania Siva was sentenced to ten years' transportation.

These monstrously vindictive sentences made south India gasp in amazement. The people's faith in British justice was shattered. The accused immediately arranged for appeal to the High Court. *The Hindu* editorially observed that "the proceedings in the Court make it clear to us that the accused have not had the advantage of such a fair trial as they were entitled to have."

In the appeals, the High Court reduced Subramania

Siva's sentence to six years and Chidambaram Pillai's sentence on the two counts to six years' transportation.

The Hindu, while welcoming the reduction in the sentences, pointed out that the cases had been tried by judges who had no knowledge of Tamil, and only a person knowing Tamil could have properly judged whether the speeches, which were the basis of the criminal charges, were really so objectionable: "The conviction in the second case as regards Mr Chidambaram Pillai and the conviction of Mr Siva in the first case are mainly based upon appreciation of evidence.... It is to be regretted, however, that for the disposal of two such important cases in which the evidence of Indian witnesses had to be weighed, and the propriety and correctness of the translation of vernacular words and expressions had to be decided upon, one of the two Indian judges now on the High Court was not called on to assist in their disposal. This is a defect in the composition of the Bench which was not unavoidable and which, in our humble opinion, must seriously detract from the value which ought to attach to the judgment of the High Court. We may say, however, that if the convictions in the two cases are sound, the substantial reduction of sentences is a modification of the decision of Mr Pinhey, which will mitigate the shock which his monstrous sentences and extremely crude notions of political principles have caused in the minds of the general public."

CHAPTER 10

CRITICISM OF THE BUREAUCRACY

The bold and forthright manner in which *The Hindu* condemned the action of the authorities at Tirunelveli and the courage with which it called the officials responsible to account for the shooting were typical of the paper's handling of public issues under Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's stewardship. At a time when the foreign Executive wielded immense power and patronage and the laws were heavily weighted against the press, it required no small courage and strength of conviction to speak out against official vagaries and expose cases of injustice and harassment.

Hard on the heels of the Tirunelveli Sedition Cases, the Government of Madras instituted prosecutions for sedition against G. Subramania Iyer, the respected Editor and publisher of *Swadesamitran*. and M. Srinivasan, Editor and publisher of *India*, a popular Tamil weekly of which the poet Subramania Bharati was *de facto* Editor. Subramania Iyer and Srinivasan were arrested, and their newspaper offices were searched.

The action against the Editor of *India* was not unexpected, as the paper had been a virulent critic of the Government and of those "moderate" politicians who supported them. But the action against G. Subramania Iyer, who was the doyen of journalists in Madras, and a political leader well known throughout India, was amazing. Subramania Iyer had not only been restrained in his criticisms of the Government, but since the Congress cleavage at Surat he had been a supporter of the Moderates.

When the Government proceeded against such a

respected journalist as G. Subramania Iyer, *The Hindu* and other papers felt that it signified the beginning of a new era of repression aimed at the press. *The Hindu* pointed out that the law provided for issuing a warning in the first instance and then taking action against a paper if it persisted in objectionable writing. As far as G. Subramania Iyer was concerned, ever since he began his journalistic and public career, he had been anything but a demagogue. *The Hindu* urged that the Government should, considering his standing and past record as well as his state of health, drop the prosecution against him. "The Madras Presidency", it said, "is in an extremely peaceful condition just now. It has been so for several years past but for ebullitions caused by temporary and local causes at Cocanada and Tirunelveli. Any excitement that is visible on the surface of society in parts of the Presidency is more or less traceable to the prosecutions for sedition that have been set on foot."

Although the Government of Madras ultimately withdrew the prosecution against G. Subramania Iyer, contenting itself with a demand of security, for a while it was strongly rumoured that the Government might proceed against *The Hindu* also for the editorial it had written in defence of G. Subramania Iyer. Looking back on the events of those days A. Rangaswami Iyengar, who was Assistant Editor and Manager of *The Hindu* in 1908, said in an article in December 1923: "Those who can now remember the anxious days that followed in Madras the arrest and prosecution of the late Mr G. Subramania Iyer in 1908 and the remarkably outspoken support which *The Hindu* gave him at the time will recall the repeated rumours that flew about the City regarding the warrants of arrest for Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. Late in the night one day, Mr V. S. Srinivasa Sastri anxiously picked me up at the Luz Church corner where I was then living and insisted on

our going down to 'Farm House' (the residence of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar) to caution him against the impending trouble of which Mr Sastri believed he had very reliable news. We went along what were then dreary and perilous roads and found Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar as usual poring over his books and papers. We detailed to him circumstantially what all we had heard and waited for what he might tell us. 'Yes, if it is going to come, let it come', he said in his most composed and coolest manner. Mr Sastri was taken aback, but persisted. He gently suggested that perhaps he 'might think of making some necessary arrangements' if the thing took place. 'Oh, I have no arrangements to make,' came the prompt reply. 'No, but they might,' said Mr Sastri, 'start a search in the office, and you may see that they are not allowed to misuse books, papers or even stray, rejected manuscripts that might be found undestroyed, as they did in Tilak's case, or involve others against whom the police may have designs.' 'I do not think there is anything secret or surreptitious in any records or papers at the office,' he replied and Mr Sastri warmly acknowledged his great gratification at discovering him so strong and firm. We wended our way back and reached our homes at midnight after an interesting conversation with him on the general situation."

Not only Srinivasa Sastri but other friends were also perturbed. C. Vijiaraghavachariar of Salem, an intimate friend of the family, had at this time come to Madras to see Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. While Vijiaraghavachariar was with him, a number of others also called on him and some of them advised him to follow the example of poet Subramania Bharati and voluntarily leave for Pondicherry, the French Indian city, which would give him protection; he could return when the trouble had blown over. Later, when Vijiaraghavachariar and Kasturi Ranga

Iyengar were alone, they wanted to know each other's mind most dispassionately. For this purpose they decided that each should write on a piece of paper what he thought was the best policy to adopt in the circumstances. Vijiaraghavachariar wrote on his slip of paper: "An editor, if he wants to honourably discharge his duties, should not be afraid of imprisonment or even loss of life." Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had written on his slip that he was not going to be daunted by anything coming in the way of his following his principles and putting his ideals into practice. They were mutually happy to discover their like-mindedness, and their friendship became closer from then onwards.

It later transpired that the Government did want to take action against Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, but that the Advocate-General of Madras had expressed the view that a prosecution would not be sustainable. Not satisfied with his opinion, the Government consulted the Advocate-General of Bombay, who, too, gave a similar opinion. It was only then that the Government dropped the idea.

During the next few years, there were many occasions when *The Hindu* had to take a strong line in regard to several lapses on the part of officials. "The Chingleput *Salaam* Case" was a notable instance.

G. H. B. Jackson, Joint Magistrate of Chingleput, was one day riding on his cycle, when a schoolboy aged seven shouted "Good morning" in what the Magistrate thought was a loud, rude and provocative manner. He took it into his head to initiate a case against the boy in his own court, went through the motions of a trial, and sentenced the boy to a fine of Rs. 5, or, in default, one week's rigorous imprisonment. When the guardian of the boy, with a view presumably to filing an appeal, applied for a copy of the judgment, the application was refused. Instead, the Joint Magistrate sent a letter which read: "It has occurred to me

that my proceedings in C.C. No. 133 of 1911, being without permission of the District Magistrate, were void. It is open to me to proceed *ab initio* and to refer the case for trial to the District Magistrate; but I consider that your son has been taught a lesson and I have no desire to prolong the proceedings. The fine of rupees five will be refunded."

The Hindu assailed the entire proceedings on moral as well as legal grounds. "It is exceedingly curious," it wrote, "that the Magistrate was not able to find out until some days after he had delivered his judgment that there was moral as well as a legal flaw in the action which he took against the boy. Mr Jackson, I.C.S., is a First Class Magistrate of over ten years' standing, and about six months ago acted as District and Sessions Judge. His ignorance of the elementary principles of law, justice and propriety as displayed in this case is simply amazing and incredible .. Having once taken up the case and disposed of it in as irrational a manner as he had, it was not open to Mr Jackson *suo motu* to annul it, to refund the fine and to leave the matter to stand there, even on the lofty ground that 'your son has been taught a lesson.' The person in need of a lesson now is Mr Jackson himself—and this we hope he will receive from the High Court and the Government.... We hope the Government would take due notice of the conduct of Mr Jackson who is manifestly unfit to be left any longer in an office which requires of its holder sympathetic and tactful dealings with men, and presupposes an ordinary acquaintance with law and procedure."

The matter was raised in the British Parliament, and the upshot of the whole affair was that the Government of Madras expressed their severe displeasure at the Magistrate's conduct.

A source of constant vexation to the public in those

days was the practice of minor officials in the districts making unlawful levies for "supplies" on behalf of higher officials on tour. When sometime in 1909, the Madras Government drew the attention of their subordinates to the Board of Revenue's rules on the subject, *The Hindu* commented: "These rules are more honoured in the breach than in the observance. The worst offenders are some of the highest officers themselves, officers who are expected to see to the enforcement of these rules. The touring officer's levies constitute a grave scandal and those who have any idea of the belongings of a *Jamabandy* camp can realize the full significance of this scandal. If the Government would consider any violation of these rules as amounting to personal misconduct entailing severe departmental punishment, there might be some improvement in the present deplorable state of things."

On seeing this editorial, the Chief Secretary to the Government wrote to the Editor asking him to be so good as to assist the Governor-in-Council by acquainting him with specific instances of breach of the rules in question. The following memorandum was sent by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar to the Government :

> "Rule 3 of the Board Proceedings required every Collector or other District Officer to insist on a written order being given by his servant for everything wanted.
>
> "Not only is this rule practically ignored but District Collectors accept all the supplies made to them of costly varieties and delicacies and favourite requirements at the suggestion or advice of their servants. No written orders are given in such cases and neither bills nor vouchers are prepared, because these are never paid for. The vouchers and bills are prepared in the usual routine at normal rate for ordinary supplies and receipts are taken for the small sum made out and probably payment of these is made. But the actual cost to the *monigar*, or those who send the supplies which are accepted,

is very much greater. Apart from the hardship, it demoralizes the administration."

The memorandum went on to quote quite a few instances, including a garland for a Collector purchased by the head of a *mutt* for Rs. 600 and a pair of ear-rings offered to another Collector's lady.

A seasoned lawyer himself, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was keen that the proper procedures should be observed in Court so that the ends of justice might not be defeated. An incident may be recalled in this connection.

In 1912, Mr Marshall, a junior Presidency Magistrate in Madras, was hearing a complaint by the Plague Inspector against a certain person for failing to present himself for examination. The Barrister appearing for the accused, K. K. Chacko, raised an objection that Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code, under which the complaint had been preferred, had no application to the case. The Magistrate overruled the objection, tried the accused and convicted him. Counsel thereupon requested the Magistrate to record the objection and the following argument ensued:

Counsel : Will your Worship kindly make a note of my objection ?

Magistrate : I will not do anything of the sort. I am in full possession of my senses. I am not bound to take anything down.

Counsel : Your Worship is bound to take down my objection.

Magistrate : I am not bound to take down anything. This is under the summary proceedings.

Counsel : But your Worship knows that if we are to go up in revision, there must be materials enough before the High Court to enable it to go into the case. Will your Worship therefore kindly take down my objection ?

Magistrate : I will not do it. I am in possession of my senses. If you repeat that request, I will commit you for contempt of court.

Counsel: A Counsel is entitled to urge any point in his client's favour. I do not see how this can be called contempt of court. Under the circumstances that remark about contempt was quite uncalled for.

Publishing in full the exchange between Counsel and Magistrate given above, *The Hindu* editorially observed: "It is very regrettable that the Magistrate should have so far forgotten what was due to his own position and to that of the Counsel before him as to make the remark which he did. Mr Marshall's flaring up at the Counsel for asking him to note down his objection in order that he may be enabled to rely upon it in the High Court upon Revision, is similar to the conduct of the Joint Magistrate, Mr. Jackson, who said it was impudent on the part of the pleader when the latter put in an application for the copy of the judgment delivered against his client in order to file a Revision petition in the High Court against it. Mr Marshall is a Magistrate who had never practised at the Bar, but should know enough from his experience as a Magistrate that members of the legal profession are entitled to be treated with becoming consideration in the discharge of their duties towards their clients. Whether Counsel was right or wrong in the objection which he took as regards the case for the prosecution, he was entitled to ask it to be recorded by the Magistrate. It showed an excess of irritability and far from a judicial temper on the part of the Magistrate to say that the request constituted in his opinion a contempt of court. Counsel seems very properly to have resented the remark of the Magistrate as uncalled for."

By regular publication of such reports and comment Kasturi Ranga Iyengar induced in many a haughty and opinionated British official not only a respect for law and procedure, but also a wholesome fear of public exposure and criticism.

CHAPTER 11

REFORM AND REPRESSION

Ever since 1906, differences between the Moderates and the Extremists in the Indian National Congress were growing sharper and matters seemed to be heading for a crisis. They managed to avoid a break at the Calcutta Congress in 1906—which was presided over by Dadabhai Naoroji —but at the next session at Surat, the differences came to a head. The Moderates, under the leadership of Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta, who controlled the Congress at the time, wanted to prevent the Congress from being committed to any policy which might antagonize the Government at a time when John Morley, the Liberal Secretary of State for India, notwithstanding his support to the repressive policy in India, was believed to be in favour of a progressive measure of reforms for India. The Extremists, led by B. G. Tilak, wished to strengthen the national movement by appealing to the people and to achieve political progress by the strength of the nation and not as a gift from the British.

Writing on the eve of the Surat Congress, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was highly critical of the Congress's weak-kneed policy: "The National Congress meets this year at Surat under very exceptional circumstances.... Since the last Congress, the Government became stiffened in its resolve to disregard public opinion and to heap repressive measures upon the heads of the people. It has been a dark era of administrative reaction and of curtailment of popular rights. During this time, what did the National Congress do? As

a national entity, it has been voiceless and powerless for good. It was silent as the grave when national rights were trampled upon by the high authority of Government, and it was serenely indifferent to the spectacle of individuals being persecuted by official tyranny and wrong-doing.

"The deportation of Mr Lajpat Rai under a Regulation, which is a standing menace to the Constitutional rights of the people, the wholly unjustifiable attitude of the officers of Government from the Secretary of State downwards in respect of this act of official injustice and tyranny, the oppressive prosecutions of Editors and newspapers, and students of colleges and schools, executive high-handedness and terrorism throughout the country and the passing of the Seditious Meetings Act, are all instances of repressive measures which are altogether unworthy of the traditions of the British Government for justice and constitutional rule. These are the general features of the administration in India as a whole. But particular Provincial Administrations have been even worse. We regret to have to say that the Madras Government has in several of its administrative acts shown a thorough disregard of public opinion, and a spirit of high-handedness and absence of fair play in dealing with the interests of the people.... On the whole, the trend of policy of the present rulers of India, both Imperial and Provincial, is to make the people rely almost entirely upon their own resources. Under the circumstances, it is nothing strange that the Swadeshi-Boycott movement has received a powerful impetus and is gaining active adherents every day among the thinking portion of the Indian public."

At the Surat Congress, there was quite a large contingent of delegates from Madras. V. Krishnaswami Iyer led the Moderate delegation, and V. O. Chidambaram Pillai headed over a hundred Extremist delegates to the

Congress. The Extremist delegation included S. Duraiswami Iyer and the Tamil poet C. Subramania Bharati. When confusion broke on the Congress dais, the Madras Extremist delegates played an important part, first, by passively protecting Tilak from assault, and later by actively participating in the fusillade of chairs that were thrown about.

Although he was avowedly a supporter of the Tilak school of thought, when the Surat Congress broke up in chaos, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar did not hesitate to criticize the Extremists for unseemly conduct in public. Deploring indiscipline, which was utterly repugnant to him, he wrote :

"It is difficult for us to understand the extraordinary perversity which has actuated the conduct of the Extremists .... Mr Tilak and the other prominent men of the Extremist party cannot, under the circumstances, be acquitted of active complicity with the hooliganism which caused the dissolution of the Congress meeting yesterday. We have pointed out before that the movement to make the Hon'ble Dr Rash Behari Ghose retire from the office of President was a most ill-advised and improper one. It was condemned throughout the country and Mr Lajpat Rai's dignified refusal to countenance it had, it was believed, given the quietus to the movement. The further development of it in yesterday's proceedings shows the great lengths to which the Extremist party is prepared to go in disregard of intelligent and healthy public opinion and in violation of all principles of decency, decorum and constitutional methods....It is difficult to see how anybody of average intelligence, character and education could have felt justified in hooting down Mr Surendranath Banerjea. Let alone his intense patriotism and vast services to the country, are the Extremists so ignorant, so bigoted and so void of commonsense that in their fight with the Government and agitation for constitu-

tional rights they will not allow a lifelong servant of the country to exercise his right of speech?"

It was a strong attack on the Extremists. Lest it should be inferred from this that he had turned pro-Moderate, there was another editorial next day in which he declared : "......The draft resolution framed by the Moderate Party in regard to the Constitution of the Congress is one against which a good deal can be said. It contains a proposed charter, as it were, of the Congress whose principles seem to be in direct opposition to those which form the creed of the Extremist Party. The adoption of this resolution by the Congress would have the effect of excluding the members of the Extremist Party from the Congress deliberations in future.. But the Extremist Party have a right to protest against their own annihilation, and the Congress would lose its character as a national organization if an important section of the public like the Extremist Party is denied admittance into it. With great deference to those of our Indian leaders who have framed the draft resolution, it does constitute an attempt to go back upon some of the principles which have been affirmed by previous Congresses. This, we consider, is a grave blunder."

The Government were not slow in taking advantage of the split in the Congress ranks. Under the inspiration of the Secretary of State, they began to woo the Moderates and suppress the Extremists. In the Madras Presidency, Sir Arthur Lawley, the Governor, revelled in the policy of repression as we have already seen in the case of the 'Tirunelveli Riots'.

The years 1908 and 1909 were a period of great trial for the country when a frightful wave of repression swept over the land. The early months of 1908 also saw a

widening of the rift between the Moderates and the Extremists, accentuated as it was by long-standing party troubles in Maharashtra in which Tilak and Gokhale were ranged on opposite sides. The draft Constitution for the Congress accepted by the Convention Committee in 1908 laid down the creed of the Congress as self-government within the Empire. This was clearly an attempt to keep out the Extremists from the national organization.

The Moderates in Madras, led by V. Krishnaswami Iyer, suggested at this juncture the holding of the next Congress session at Madras. This was to be what was called the Convention Congress, a meeting which would rigorously exclude the Extremists. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar did not like the split in the national organization. *The Hindu* vigorously pleaded for maintaining the Congress as the representative organ of the entire people: "A single Congress, representing all interests in the country and all shades of opinion, is the only way of focusing the collective sentiments of the voice of the nation..... In a famous passage in *Representative Government,* J. S. Mill writes: 'The proper office of a representative assembly is to watch and control the Government, to throw the light of publicity on its acts; to compel a full exposition and justification of all of them which anyone considers questionable... In addition to this, Parliament has an office not inferior to this in importance: to be at once the nation's Committee of Grievances and its Congress of Opinions, an arena in which not only the general opinion of the nation, but that of every section of it, and as far as possible of every eminent individual whom it contains, can produce itself in full light and challenge discussion.' We think every one of the words in the above passage is applicable to the Indian National Congress as it ought to be."

While Congress affairs were in this divided state, the political situation in the country was heading towards a new crisis. Unrest in different parts of India was manifesting itself in various forms. In Bengal, terrorism reared its head. In the Punjab, agrarian agitation became prominent. In Maharashtra, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was sentenced to six years' transportation on a charge of sedition, and whisked away to far-off Mandalay in Burma.

Writing on the conviction of Tilak, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar said : "The verdict of 'guilty' in Mr Tilak's case will not take the public by surprise, nor the sentence of six years' transportation inflicted upon the illustrious prisoner before him by the learned Parsee Judge. The Judge had shown the bent of his mind when he declined to admit Mr Tilak to bail and declared that he was not willing to give his reasons for the refusal, as, if given, they might prejudice the case. He had read the articles and evidently come to the conclusion that they were seditious. He has now emphatically affirmed his view in passing sentence upon Mr Tilak that none but a diseased and perverse intellect would hold the accused innocent of the offence. This is an uncalled-for and unmerited slander against the two jurymen who honestly ventured to differ from the others in the jury box. We undertake to say that ninety-nine out of one hundred persons who read the articles after the prosecution was launched, were struck with astonishment that the Bombay Government, under the liberal regime of Sir George Clarke, should have deemed such articles seditious and should have directed the prosecution... We find, on the whole, little substantial difference between a judicial trial conducted as Mr Tilak's case was, and punishment by Executive order for which Lord Curzon has put in an eloquent plea in the House of Lords. All lovers of constitutional progress and good government in the country will look upon the result in Mr Tilak's case with dismay."

Tilak was not the only prominent leader to be dealt with for sedition. In the Punjab, leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh were deported. In Madras, vindictive sentences had been inflicted on patriots like V. O. Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva.

Not content with this, the Government of India armed itself in a hurry with two draconian measures of legislation—The Explosive Substances Act and the Press (Incitement to Offences) Act. Both these acts were passed into law in a matter of days, without time being given for either the public or even the legislators to consider them at leisure. Writing editorially on the new laws, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar said that they were far more drastic than even the hated Press laws instituted by Lord Lytton : "The proceedings of the Imperial Legislative Council of yesterday, as narrated to us by our Simla Correspondent, yesterday and today, form much unpleasant reading and contain bitter food for reflection by all Englishmen and Indians alike who are interested in the welfare of this country. It was on Saturday last the public throughout the Empire knew as vaguely as could be managed, what the nature of the business was which called forth the members of the Imperial Council to an urgent meeting on the heights of Simla. Only three representatives of the people found it convenient to attend and they had barely 24 hours' notice of the projected measures of legislation. . . .As regards the Press Act, we fail to perceive that any case has been made out to warrant the very wide and dangerous provisions which the Act embodies. The Indian Press, we admit with Nawab Syed Mahomed, is by no means perfect or near it. But is the objectionable conduct of a stray journal like the *Jugantar* sufficient reason for imposing on the entire Press in India, the bulk of whom are respectable, loyal and law-abiding, a law which arms the executive with the widest discretionary

powers liable to grossest abuses in the actual working? Let us realize exactly what this law implies. It was stated by Sir Harvey that the objects the Government have in view in making the law were the prevention of the manufacture of dangerous explosives and of writings inciting to such dangerous acts. If this is so, the Press Act should have been strictly limited in its scope to the incitement to acts which the Explosives Act contemplates. This, however, is not the case. Section 3 of the Act lays down that if any newspaper, in the opinion of a magistrate, who is applied to by the local Government for the purpose, 'contains any incitement to murder, to any offence under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908, or *to any act of violence'*, he can proceed to inquire into the same and to seize and forfeit the press and printing materials by which the article was published. The words 'any act of violence' are not only extremely vague, but put a dangerous and hitherto unheard-of power in the hands of the executive, and its by no means scrupulous agents, the Police, to harass and to ruin newspapers and printers whenever they become obnoxious to them. . . . Even the 'Gagging Act' of Lord Lytton was founded on principles which are far less stringent than those on which the present Act is founded. The course might have been adopted which was followed in the former Act in regard to incitement and disaffection. Security might have been imposed for transgressions, and forfeiture then provided for in the last resort. These preliminaries are all rejected in the new Act. What the Act provides for is immediate confiscation, followed by a complete suppression of the offending paper. It is difficult to believe under the circumstances, that His Excellency has not yielded to the clamour of those around who have made 'hysterical demands' and has not succumbed to the taunts of weakness and fear which unscrupulous Anglo-Indians are freely flinging at him."

It was in such an atmosphere that the Minto-Morley Reforms were ushered in. When the Secretary of State's Reform Despatch and Statement was made public in December 1908, *The Hindu* welcomed it whole-heartedly, although it did not fail to point out the anomaly of the repression that was rampant in the country while the Government were announcing reforms. The editorial read : " 'Righteousness exalteth a nation' was the noble sentiment by uttering which Lord Ripon, the most beneficent of Indian Viceroys, repelled the argument used by a Madras Civilian in the Imperial Legislative Council in support of a measure of doubtful justice to the people of India. A similar strain of sentiment runs through the admirable speech of Lord Morley in the House of Lords, which is marked by a degree of moral elevation and high-minded purpose for which the people of this country cannot feel too grateful...

"That portion of Lord Morley's speech which would be very unconvincing to the Indian public is the one relating to the repressive laws recently enacted in India and the wholesale deportation of no less than nine respectable Indian citizens. It is quite clear that Lord Morley has sanctioned the measures with great reluctance and in consequence of extreme pressure from the local authorities. The same is very likely the attitude of the Viceroy. We cannot, however, help thinking that in the matter of the arrest and deportations of nine persons....a most deplorable blunder has been committed."

The initial satisfaction with the principles underlying the Minto-Morley Reforms was short-lived. Lord Morley's reiteration of the Partition of Bengal as "a settled fact" and the vehemence of the speeches of local Governors and their henchmen made Indians uneasy. *The Hindu* voiced the fear "that what is given by the Secretary of State and

the Government of India may virtually be taken away by the many local gods and demigods."

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's fears proved only too true. Under the guise of making regulations for the new Reforms, the provincial satraps and the Government of India virtually nullified the concessions the Reforms were designed to offer. In Madras, particularly, the Lawley regime had an unblest record of repression and reaction. Apart from the prosecution of leading editors and the sedition cases in Tirunelveli, other oppressive measures were enforced. Land revenue was unduly enhanced in many districts; repression of students continued, punitive police was imposed on the slightest pretext to cow down the people into abject submission. It was during Lawley's administration that the Madras Government decided on abolishing the competitive system for recruitment to the Provincial Civil Service and generally discouraged members of that Service from having any expectation of higher appointments in the public services.

Sir Arthur Lawley's Governorship came to a close in October 1911, and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar thought it a fit occasion to review his entire regime and place on record an indictment that might serve as a lesson for his successors. As this could not be done in one leading article on a single day, he wrote a series of articles which for their language and courage created a sensation in the country. That a Governor who was yet to relinquish his duties should have been placed in the pillory and held up to reprobation for his dark record was an event in Indian journalism. The articles caused much flutter in the official dove-cotes but the Government prudently chose not to take any action against *The Hindu*.

Summing up his indictment of the Lawley regime, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar said : "In the long series of repressive

acts and measures which were adopted during Sir Arthur Lawley's administration, it may be said that the local Government was only carrying out the policy of repression which was avowedly pursued by the Government of India itself. No candid observer can fail to perceive, however, that the coercive measures adopted in this Presidency were far in excess of the actual requirement.. The policy of the Government of India and of the Secretary of State was one, as it was termed, of Repression so far as it was needed and of Reform in order to forward the national aspirations of the people. But it is well known that Sir Arthur Lawley did not show the same active zeal in promoting Reform as in carrying out Repression. It is an open secret....that Sir Arthur Lawley's Government was opposed to Lord Morley's Reform Scheme in its cardinal points, *viz,* the expansion of the Legislative Councils and the appointment of Indians to be Members of the Executive Councils."

Observing that "the manner in which Sir Arthur Lawley handled the public questions which came up before him for consideration soon after his taking up his high office, furnished the true criterion as to his administrative capacity and success", the editorial recalled the Governor's handling of such problems as the Swadeshi agitation, the Tirunelveli riots, the student agitation at Cocanada and Rajahmundry, and the sedition cases against G. Subramania Iyer, V. O. Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva. "The widespread dissatisfaction caused by the treatment and punishment of Indian officers in the services", "the unhappy lot of the low-paid and low-placed Government official", and the Government's "unsympathetic attitude towards the Transvaal deportees who were stranded in Madras about the middle of 1910", were other points made against the regime of the retiring Governor. It was hoped that the

lessons of the retiring Governor's actions would not be lost on the incoming Governor, who might prove himself a better administrator than his predecessor.

The new Governor, Sir Thomas Carmichael, did prove to be a welcome change for the better from Sir Arthur Lawley. His progressive and liberal outlook was evident right from the start. During the very short period he was Governor of Madras, he invited persons like Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, whose views were critical of Government policy and action, to meet and discuss with him the political situation. This was unheard-of respect for public opinion, and naturally it helped considerably to change the atmosphere. Carmichael was so much impressed with Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's knowledge, sincerity and public spirit that he invited him to meet him frequently and let him know if anything went wrong or was calculated to offend popular sentiment. For obvious reasons, however, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar politely told him that such visits would be misunderstood and would also not be conducive to journalistic objectivity.

Carmichael was instrumental in getting Kasturi Ranga Iyengar invited to the Delhi Durbar in December 1911, when King George V was crowned as the Emperor of India. While Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was making arrangements to leave for Delhi, he learnt that there was likely to be some discrimination in treatment as between European journalists and Indian journalists, that while the Anglo-Indian Editors would be paid their travelling and other expenses, the Indian Editors would have to meet their expenses themselves. He vigorously protested against this and declined to attend unless the position was cleared up. A telegram from Sir Thomas Carmichael assured him that his information was wrong and that there would be no distinction between Englishmen and Indians. The

telegram pressed him to attend the Durbar. On this assurance, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar agreed to attend the Durbar.

Sir Thomas Carmichael was transferred to Bengal as Governor in 1912. It was a pity that his term in Madras had been so short. He was succeeded by Lord Pentland, a Victorian of wooden mentality, who was totally unequal to dealing with the political situation that was developing in the Madras Presidency.

CHAPTER 12

THE ISLINGTON COMMISSION

The first five years of stewardship of *The Hindu* were packed with anxious moments for Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. The firmness, courage and dignity with which he conducted the paper through the strenuous and trying days of the Lawley regime brought him rich dividends in terms of a growing circulation and a deepening public confidence in the paper. The end of the period also saw *The Hindu* surmounting its chronic financial difficulties and emerging into a stability and strength it had never known before. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar so carefully husbanded the revenues of the paper that he was able to pay off the accumulated liabilities that had been inherited as a mortgage on the paper when he had purchased it. With the growth in circulation, the advertisement revenue was also growing. European business houses, which in the past had made it a rule not to advertise in nationalist newspapers, found that they could not any longer practise the taboo with regard to *The Hindu* in view of its growing readership and influence.

1910 marked the opening of a new chapter in the country's history. Lord Hardinge succeeded Lord Minto as Viceroy and he made an excellent impression at the start of his career by his policy of trust and sympathy. But the working of the Minto-Morley reforms continued to be unsatisfactory. The attention of the country was divided between internal problems like reforms and external problems like the plight of Indians in South Africa. Lord Hardinge vigorously championed the cause of the Indians in South Africa and this was eventually responsible for the

Smuts-Gandhi Agreement there. With the Congress weakened by the deportation of leaders like Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, repression had won the first round; the country was marking time politically, till the release of Tilak and the developments during the war led to a revival of nationalist agitation.

Meanwhile, at Madras, public attention was centered on the affairs of the Theosophical Society. At the instance of Dr M. C. Nanjunda Rao and Dr T. M. Nair, *The Hindu* took up the cause of a large body of Theosophists as well as the general public who were disturbed by certain developments in Theosophic beliefs and activities that caused apprehension among the Hindus particularly.

The paper had to face two criminal prosecutions for defamation and two civil suits for damages to the tune of two lakhs of rupees at the hands of the Theosophical Society and its leading votaries. It manfully fought for the rights of free criticism and *bona fide* public agitation in respect of social as well as political issues. The acquittal of *The Hindu* in the criminal cases eventually led to a settlement as a result of which Mrs Besant and the Theosophical Society dropped all their civil suits. An important by-product of these proceedings was the diversion of Mrs Besant's interest to Indian politics and her emergence in later years as a vigorous champion of Home Rule for India.

A notable episode of the pre-war period in which Kasturi Ranga Iyengar came out with his head unbowed and his prestige higher than ever occurred during the visit of the Islington Commission to Madras. The Commission, known officially as the Royal Commission on Public Services in India, arrived at Madras early in January 1913, to hold its sittings and examine witnesses. Besides Lord Islington, the Chairman, other members of the Commission

were Lord Ronaldshay, J. Ramsay Macdonald, the Hon. Mr Gopal Krishna Gokhale, F. G. Sly, Sir Theodore Morrison, Sir Murray Hammick, Sir Valentine Chirol, Mr Justice Abdur Rahim, the Hon. Mr W. C. Madge, Mr Justice Oldfield, Dewan Bahadur R. Ramachandra Rao and Dewan Bahadur V. Subramaniam Pantulu, the last three being co-opted for the Madras sittings.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar felt that the Commission's enquiry furnished a valuable occasion for pressing the Indian case for equal opportunities in the higher services. He wrote a series of editorials analysing the problems that should be presented before the Commission and urging that the evidence of Indian witnesses should be based on a common approach. Thanks to his efforts, such a consensus was achieved and the Madras sittings of the Commission proved very useful.

Among the non-official witnesses invited to give evidence before the Commission was Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. He submitted a written memorandum on the basis of which he was cross-examined orally by the Commission. His written memorandum was emphatic in its condemnation of the vagaries of the non-Indian bureaucracy and thorough-going in its treatment of the relative claims on grounds of fitness of European and Indian officials in India. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar favoured the holding of simultaneous examinations in England and in India for recruitment to the Indian Civil Service, the separation of Judicial and Executive functions, and the filling of Indian judicial posts of District Judges and upwards by recruitment from among the members of the legal profession both in England and in India. He was against the principle of representation of classes and communities in appointments to the public service, and favoured the posting of the more efficient officers in provinces other than their own. He felt that the European

members of the Indian Civil Service, under the prevailing system of recruitment, were generally out of touch with the people of the country, that they had little regard for the feelings, habits and traditions of the people, that they considered themselves an exclusive and privileged class, and that they were disposed to be too tolerant towards lapses on the part of members of the services. These charges, particularly the observations about the attitude and behaviour of the European civil servant and the examples of incompetence, based on official records and press reports, made altogether such a damning indictment of the system that Sir Murray Hammick, himself a Civilian, tried his best to prove that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was biased and had not given a true picture. He tried to refute Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's statements by a reference to communications from correspondents appearing in *The Hindu* from time to time speaking in laudatory terms about "the qualities of head and heart" of European civilian officers. And where Sir Murray left off, Sir Valentine Chirol, author of the notorious book *Indian Unrest,* took up. The following extracts from their questions and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's replies reveal the atmosphere in which the Commission conducted its enquiry in Madras :

Sir Murray Hammick : In the first answer in your proof, when you say that the administration is carried on as a "soulless machinery" so far as the larger interests of the country are concerned, do you refer to the Indian Civil Service officers generally or only to the European members of the Indian Civil Service ?

S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar : I refer to the European members only.

Sir M. H. : Do you think that this want of touch with the people of the country is increasing or diminishing since the time you saw them in Coimbatore twenty years ago ?

S. K. : My impression is that it has been increasing.

Sir M. H. : You say that this has been getting worse. When did this deterioration of the service, which you say is so marked now, first set in ?

S. K. : I cannot say when it did set in. I have found it most marked during the time when there was the so-called political unrest in this country. I had reason to believe that every Civilian Officer distrusted, without any discrimination, any Indian whoever he might be. If, for instance, a political outrage happened in the remotest province of Bengal, no Indian was safe from the suspicion of Civilians. Every respectable man was viewed with suspicion as regards this political unrest.

Sir M. H. : Every respectable man was regarded with suspicion ?

S. K. : Yes. No man could free himself from the suspicion with which a European officer always looked upon him.

Sir M. H. : Are you talking of Madras ?

S. K. : I am talking generally. When I say every man, I mean that in the vast majority of cases, every European Officer believed that an Indian, however respectable he might be, would be connected with sedition.

Sir M. H. : Do you think that the generally prevalent opinion of intellectual persons in this Presidency is that after the unrest set in every European officer considered that the great majority of educated Indians he associated with were seditious ?

S. K. : The large majority of Indians.

Sir M. H. : I am glad to say I never thought that before. It may be so, but it never occurred to me before. You read your own paper, I suppose, *The Hindu ?*

S. K. : I do not think that is a question you ought to put to me, that is the answer I will give you.

Chairman : I am sure Sir Murray Hammick did not intend any offence.

S. K. : It is the paper of which I am the Editor.

Sir M. H. : I had no intention whatever of hurting your feelings and I apologize profoundly. What I wanted to go on to say was this. I read your paper very carefully for very many years, and what I always noted in your paper was that although your leading articles and your face page very often contained

very strong criticisms on our service, which I never resented, when I turned over the pages, I generally saw that four or five correspondents were writing from various districts and I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that out of those letters at least three out of six contained most laudatory accounts of the Indian Civil Service Officers of the districts. Generally, the Indian Civil Service Officer was described as being most courteous, and it was said : "We are exceedingly delighted to have such a pleasant gentleman in our midst" or "Mr Somebody was received with acclamation at the station as our most popular Collector." Do you read those articles ?

S. K. : I do not mean to say there are not officers who deserve well of the people; at the same time I would say that those letters are written by people who are on the spot with those officers and generally want to curry favour with them. That is a matter that you ought to be acquainted with as much as with the other.

Here Sir Valentine Chirol took over, and their exchange of words went in this manner :

Sir Valentine Chirol : You advocate the establishment of competitive examinations in England and India for the Indian Civil Service ?

S. K. : Yes.

Sir V. C. : Do you think that this desire is very widely entertained by the people of India ?

S. K. : I think that 99 per cent of the people of India entertain that. You must be aware of the political agitation since the time of the Congress—I think you have referred to it in your own book on the *Indian Unrest*.

Sir V. C. : The result of that new system of competition will be, you hope, ultimately to lead to a large substitution of the Indian agency for the British agency in the administration of this country ?

S. K. : I do not say a large substitution; I say a reasonable substitution of Indian agency for British agency. I am not advocating a large substitution of Indian agency for British agency. You would see from my answer to one of the questions that if a system of simultaneous examinations is not

given to the people, but if the listed posts are to be increased, to what proportion they should be given; I have said 50 per cent.

Sir V .C. : You look to that increase at any rate ?

S. K. : Yes, I do look to that.

Sir V. C. : And you think that that increase would be very generally welcome ?

S. K. : It would be, I believe.

Sir V. C. : Are you aware that when for purposes of administrative convenience, there is a desire to effect an exchange of territory between British administered provinces and an adjoining native province, there is generally very strong protest by the inhabitants of the villages which are to be transferred against the prospects of being withdrawn from British and placed under native administration ?

S. K. : I would generally say that a British Province is better administered than most Native States.

Sir V. C. : You do not think that is in consequence of any predominance of the British agency ?

S. K. : I believe that the British Government is a sound and just one although I may take exception to individual officers.

Sir V. C. : You are in favour of complete separation of judicial and executive functions ?

S. K. : Yes.

Sir V. C. : And the withdrawal of all judicial functions from the Indian Civil Service ?

S. K. : Yes.

Sir V. C. : You say that this is necessary on account of the purity of the administration of justice ?

S. K. : Yes.

Sir V. C. : Do you mean to say that the employment of civilians in the administration of justice is detrimental to the purity of the administration of justice ?

S. K. : I mean that if the officer is both an executive officer and a judicial officer, it is detrimental.

Sir V. C. : To the purity of administration of justice ?

S. K. : Yes.

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Sir V. C.: What do you mean by the purity of administration ?

S. K.: Impartiality

Sir V. C.: That is not a matter of purity; that is partiality.

S. K.: Purity includes impartiality.

Sir V. C.: You are in favour of the employment of Indian executive officers outside the provinces of their birth ?

S. K.: Yes.

Sir V. C.: Do you really suggest that it would be either to the benefit of efficient administration or to the benefit of the good relations between the administered and the administrator that, for instance, a Muhammadan from Northern India or a *Sayvah* from Bombay Presidency should be appointed to executive office in this province where he would be entirely unfamiliar with the habits, customs and language of the country ?

S. K.: A Muhammadan from whatever part of India he may come would be much more acquainted with the people and ways here, or get to know better their customs and habits, than an Englishman.

Sir V. C.: Are you acquainted with many other parts of India ?

S. K.: I have travelled over many parts of India.

Sir V. C.: Do you think that the Indian would be more acceptable ?

S. K.: Yes.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar then, in answer to questions from Mr Justice Abdur Rahim, said that English members of the Indian Civil Service looked upon Indian entrants as a sort of intruders, and that the recruitment of Indians in large numbers would improve the tone of the Service, making it identify itself with the interests of the people of the country, its institutions and its progress.

The Hon'ble Mr W. C. Madge then put some questions in such fashion as to elicit an admission that the people were

satisfied with British officers. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar refuted this totally.

The Hon'ble Mr Gopal Krishna Gokhale then put questions to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. The questions and the answers thereto made it clear that the European officers were not as much loved by the public as the European members of the Commission chose to believe :

> *Hon. Mr Gokhale* : As regards the greater accessibility claimed for European officers, do cases occur in this Presidency from time to time in which Indians of education and position have had reason to complain of the treatment they receive from European officers ?
>
> *S. K.* : There are such cases.
>
> *Hon. Mr Gokhale* : Cases, for instance, of being kept waiting, standing outside the house before being called in ?
>
> *S. K.* : I heard of a case of this sort only the other day in which a Magistrate, when a vakil of the High Court went to prefer a criminal appeal to him, had two chairs placed at the entrance of the compound, not within his verandah. When he came into the house he found the vakil with his papers applying for bail and his petition for appeal and simply asked him what the thing was, and when told, said : "The application for bail is rejected; I will post a date for hearing the appeal." He fixed a day for hearing the appeal at that very place. When the vakil went to him on that day the Magistrate was not there. The vakil sat in the open air for half an hour, and then the Magistrate sent word to him that he would hear it in the office about half a mile away. He had to wait until 5.30. Then he heard the case and said he would deliver judgment subsequently. It was a case in which three months' rigorous imprisonment had been ordered.
>
> *Hon. Mr Gokhale* : As regards the uneducated countrymen, what is their average attitude of mind towards the average European officer ?
>
> *S. K.* : It is one of fear.
>
> *Hon. Mr Gokhale* : If an uneducated Indian wants to go to a European officer, will he go to him direct or to some peon or clerk or petty clerk ?

S. K.: He cannot. He has to satisfy servants before he can get access and most often he does not get access to a European officer.

Hon. Mr Gokhale: I have an impression that instructions were issued by the Madras Government some time ago calling upon European officers to treat Indian visitors better?

S. K.: Yes, they framed a code of manners for European officers.

Hon. Mr Gokhale: When was this code published?

S. K.: Last year, specifically asking that certain things should be observed. It was a code of etiquette in reference to Indians of respectability.

Hon. Mr Gokhale: Because complaints had reached the Government that Indians were not being properly treated?

S. K.: Yes.

Hon. Mr Gokhale: You are the Editor of a daily paper and you get exchanges from other provinces?

S. K.: Yes.

Hon. Mr Gokhale: And you glance through them?

S. K.: I go through them.

Hon. Mr Gokhale: You get exchanges from Bengal?

S. K.: Yes.

Hon. Mr Gokhale: Have you noticed letters in the Bengal papers complaining of the ill-treatment of natives at the hands of Europeans?

S. K.: I have read most scandalous cases of ill-treatment.

Hon. Mr Gokhale: Your province is not so bad as that?

S. K.: By no means.

The Hon'ble Mr Gokhale's questions and the answers they elicited were too much for Sir Valentine Chirol, who somehow wanted to discredit Kasturi Ranga Iyengar before his evidence concluded. The attempt failed miserably and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar withdrew from the Commission after giving a fitting reply to Sir Valentine as a valedictory piece.

Sir Valentine Chirol: I should like to ask you one question arising out of your reply to Mr Gokhale. You said you read letters in the papers from other provinces and you have told us yourself that you as editor are quite willing to believe the correspondence published in your own paper is entirely misleading with regard to the friendliness and good qualities of English officials, that they are written simply in order to curry favour ?

S. K.: I said in some particular cases it may have been induced by a desire to satisfy the European superior. I do not say that in every case misleading statements have been put forward.

Sir V. C.: It is a very remarkable statement for an editor of a paper to make, I must say that as a journalist.

S. K.: I am not here to receive any judgment from you as to my conduct as editor.

CHAPTER 13

THE WAR YEARS

The First World War started in July 1914, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war on Serbia. Within a month it became a war among the big Powers of Europe. Russia took the side of Serbia, Germany that of Austria-Hungary. Germany declared war on France, and Britain declared war on Germany. By 1915, all the Powers of Europe were involved, not to mention the Ottoman Empire in Asia.

When Britain declared war, India as a British dependency was automatically drawn into it. Though ill equipped at the beginning to meet the demands of a major conflict, Indian resources in men and material were mobilized, as the war progressed, on a massive scale for use in various theatres of war in Europe and Western Asia. When the war spread to Mesopotamia, Indian forces were sent to retrieve the situation. Indian troops fought gallantly in Mesopotamia, in Palestine, in Salonika, in East Africa and in France, too. By the end of the second year of the war, nearly 80,000 British officers and men and 2,10,000 Indian officers and men belonging to the Indian armed forces, all fully trained and equipped, had been despatched overseas. It was a colossal effort on India's part. In the words of the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, India was "bled absolutely white".

Political India instinctively rallied to the support of Britain in her hour of peril. The Congress expressed its loyalty and supported the war effort. Gandhiji, who had just then returned from South Africa, appealed to Indians to enlist in the Army. India was united in her wish for

British victory as it was firmly hoped that after the war was over, India's aspirations for self-government would be fully satisfied.

With the intensification of the war, several restrictions began to be imposed on the publication of news and the conduct of newspapers. Censorship of news was stringently and often capriciously applied. Newsprint, which had to be imported, was scarce and the desired quality and type of paper was not always available. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had his share of worries. The war emergency furnished a ready handle for the reactionary forces in the bureaucracy to seek to suppress nationalist activities. While whole-heartedly supporting the Allied cause and promoting the country's war effort, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar kept up the struggle for the realization of the nation's aspirations. In an attempt to provide the readers with an intelligent analysis of the war developments, he introduced a feature which proved tremendously popular and brought in a large number of European subscribers. This was a weekly editorial review of the war situation written by S. Rangaswami, a nephew of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and the principal leader-writer of the paper. In 1915, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, another nephew of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar who was working as Manager of the paper, left it to join the Tamil daily *Swadesamitran* as its Editor. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar put his elder son K. Srinivasan in charge of the management of the paper.

The war-time censorship regulations came in handy for some disgruntled European officials to vent their spleen on *The Hindu*. Messages addressed to *The Hindu* were oftentimes held up or withheld altogether. Officialdom employed any pretext to harass the paper. One such occasion arose in November 1915. The Royal Commission on Decentralization had recommended as early as 1910 the speedy establishment of village panchayats in India, but the

Board of Revenue of the Madras Government, which had the responsibility for carrying out the recommendations, was sitting tight on the Report without doing anything. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar editorially attacked the Board's inaction. He substantiated his charge by quoting from the proceedings of the Board on the subject in discussions held five years earlier, thus showing that no progress had been made all those years.

The editorial upset the Government, especially as what they had imagined to be confidential proceedings had been made public. The Revenue Secretary, Lionel Davidson, sent the following letter to the Editor of *The Hindu* :

Revenue Secretariat,
Fort St. George,
Dated 11th November, 1915

Dear Sir,

An article entitled "Irrigation Boards" which appeared in your issue of the 1st instant quotes from a Board's Proceedings stated to have been passed five years ago. I am directed to ask you to favour Government with a reference to the Board's Proceedings from which the quotation is taken and to state where it was published.

Yours faithfully,
L. Davidson

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar sent the following reply :

The Hindu Office,
Mount Road, Madras,
13th November, 1915

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your D. O. No. 2794 C/15-1 and I confess to a feeling of surprise that the proceedings of the Board referred to therein should not be within the knowledge of the Government. The extract under reference has been well known among officials of the Board as well as non-officials who

have taken interest in the matter to be part of the Board's Proceedings passed upon that portion of the report of the Decentralization Commission relating to Village Panchayats. I am not in a position to give any further information on the subject.

Yours faithfully,
Kasturi Ranga Iyengar
Editor

The Revenue Secretary was not satisfied with the reply. He sent another letter to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar :

Revenue Secretariat,
Fort St. George.
22nd November, 1915

Dear Sir,

I am desired to acknowledge your letter dated 13th November and to say that the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue to which you refer have not been published and can therefore only have become known to non-officials through breach of confidence on the part of some official. The Government recognize that you cannot tell them from whom you obtained the extract, but they feel sure that you would be the last person to approve of the dishonourable conduct of the official who made public the extract in question, and they hope you will, with the knowledge you possess as to the source of the information, do what lies in your power to prevent in future publication in *The Hindu* of unpublished Government paper or information derived from this source.

Yours truly,
L. Davidson

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar felt that an important issue relating to journalistic conduct was involved in the controversy. If the proceedings had leaked out, it was the Government's fault, and it was up to them to keep things confidential. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar sent the following reply to Davidson :

The Hindu Office,
25th November, 1915

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter No. 2794 C/15-3, dated the 22nd instant and desire to point out that though the Proceedings of the Board referred to have not been published, they were not reserved and treated as "Confidential" by the Board. The subject of the Proceedings was a matter of great public importance, and the Proceedings were by the full Board. I am unable to accept the view that it is only by a breach of confidence on the part of an official that non-officials could have become acquainted with the Board's Proceedings. When I published the extract, I had satisfied myself that the Board had not intended to treat the Proceedings as confidential. It seems to me that it is too wide a proposition to lay down that any official matter not published under official authority should not be published in the public press. Unless the nature of the subject requires non-publication or they are specially prohibited from publication, all official matters in which the public are interested must, in my opinion, be treated as open to the public to know through the medium of the Press. It is a matter of every day occurrence, in which the conductors of the Anglo-Indian Press have an advantage over those of the Indian Press, by reason of their closer association with high European officials, for official matters to be published in the public press before they are published under official authority or even when they are not so published.

Yours truly,
Kasturi Ranga Iyengar
Editor

The thrust went home and Davidson took no further action in the matter.

For some years after 1908 Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had not been active politically outside his editorial sanctum. The developments of the war years drew him out into the public and made him an active political figure.

Mrs Annie Besant decided in 1915 to divert her tireless energies to politics. She acquired the daily *The Madras*

Standard and renamed it *New India.* The new paper soon made headway as a powerful vehicle for Mrs Besant's varied ideas, and at one time it was perhaps the most popular paper in south India. Mrs Besant was not satisfied with the way Congress affairs were being managed by the Moderates. Ever since Surat, Tilak and the other Extremists had been kept out. The Congress without the militant Nationalist elements was leading an anaemic existence. Mrs Besant found that she had many ideas in common with Tilak. Tilak, who had come out of his six-year incarceration at Mandalay in 1914, started in April 1916 his Home Rule League with a view to activating political life in the country. Mrs Besant supported the idea and desired the formation of a Home Rule League on an all-India basis as a supplement to the Congress. As a powerful orator and as the respected leader of the Theosophical Society, the membership of which was at one time a coveted distinction among leading intellectuals and professional classes in the country, she soon became a power to reckon with. The Home Rule idea caught the fancy of young and old, and by September 1916 Mrs. Besant was able officially to inaugurate her All-India Home Rule League.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who had not been in sympathy with Mrs Besant's work in earlier years, was greatly impressed by what she was doing for India's political advancement. Mrs Besant also cultivated him and soon the erstwhile antagonists became staunch comrades in a common cause.

The 1915 session of the Congress at Bombay was the scene of strenuous activity by Mrs Besant. She wanted the Congress to endorse the Home Rule movement. But Lord Sinha, an inveterate Moderate, who was President of the session, was reluctant to allow the resolution to be discussed and referred it for consideration at the next session

of the Congress. The Bombay Congress was more noteworthy for the successful efforts of Mrs Besant to effect a compromise between the Moderates, who were in control, and Tilak's Nationalists who had been in the wilderness. As a result of this compromise, Tilak's followers were enabled to rejoin the Congress, but had to wait a full year before they could participate in its proceedings. It was during this year of waiting that both Tilak and Mrs Besant started their Home Rule Leagues.

The year 1916 found the Home Rule movement making headway all over south India. Lord Pentland, Governor of Madras, was disturbed by the new development. In a rather unusual gesture for a man of his stamp, he invited Kasturi Ranga Iyengar for a talk and discussed with him for over half an hour the political developments in the Presidency. Pentland, however, did not profit from Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's advice. He let loose repressive measures which created a furore all over India.

With a view to nipping the Home Rule movement in the bud, Lord Pentland threatened to take action against Mrs Besant and those engaged in the Home Rule movement. On May 14, 1917, in his speech to the Madras Legislative Council, he sounded a note of warning about the Home Rule agitation and the methods which were being employed to propagate it, methods which the Government felt would produce in Madras the same revolutionary tendencies as in Bengal. Pentland indicated in his speech that his Government would be ruthless in suppressing unrest and that the Reform proposals which were being considered might not come up to the expectations of Indian leaders. He went on to tell the Council that the agitation for reform was engineered largely by the educated classes in India and that it was they that expected much from the proposals.

Commenting on this, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar said that the tone and tenor of the speech revealed the state of panic into which the Government had worked themselves, and observed : "It (the speech) sets the seal on the nature of Lord Pentland's administration of the Presidency. Its hostile and menacing language and tone towards Indian aspirations is unworthy of the occasion and irrelevant, and distinctly tended to lower the prestige of Government. It is provocative to a degree and foreshadows repressive measures in this quiet and law-abiding Presidency which will be received with astonishment throughout India."

Of Home Rule, the Governor had said, "nobody having any true sense of responsibility will consider or declare within the range of practical politics. All thought of early grant of responsible self-government should be put entirely out of mind." Commenting on this part of the speech, *The Hindu* said: "The preposterous statement of His Excellency may be frank. . . but it signifies little political sagacity. It shows that the mighty movements that are deeply affecting the nations of the world have had little influence on His Excellency."

On seeing this editorial, the Government grew furious. H. F. W. Gillman, Member of the Governor's Executive Council in charge of the Press, requested Kasturi Ranga Iyengar to meet him. Gillman took exception to some expressions in the editorial such as that His Excellency's speech contained a threat and showed the state of panic in the Government. He said that the editorial was a misrepresentation of the Governor's speech. He also said that the reference in the article to "the vile and venomous writings" of European-owned papers was unwarranted and imputed partiality to the Government.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar pointed out that the several

expressions objected to were not in his opinion open to any objection and that the article contained a just, though severe, criticism of His Excellency's speech. He cited many instances of scurrilous attacks by European-owned papers on Indian national leaders and even on Mr Justice Abdur Rahim of the Madras High Court. He added that he could adduce many more instances of vitriolic writings in the European-owned press of which no notice, so far as the public was aware, had been taken by the Government.

Gillman discreetly changed the subject and said that *The Hindu* had in the past condoned the murder of Collector Ashe at Maniyachi and had written violently against Sir Arthur Lawley's administration.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was taken aback by Gillman's charge about the Ashe murder. He told Gillman that the allegation was an extraordinary one. He denied it absolutely and challenged Gillman to quote any proof in support of his charge. He added that if Gillman was speaking on behalf of the Government, he should do so with a greater sense of responsibility. Gillman repeated the assertion and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar asked him whether he had a copy of the article to prove his assertion. Gillman said that he did not have it and was speaking from memory and on the strength of the impression which he had formed at the time.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar pointed out that *The Hindu* had condemned the murder of Collector Ashe and that it was a pity Gillman should make such a serious charge not based on facts.

Thereupon Gillman said that he would withdraw his accusation

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar followed up his interview with Gillman with a dignified protest to the Governor-in-Council against the Member's apparent attempt to browbeat the

Press. He enclosed a copy of *The Hindu* editorial* on the Ashe murder. Giving a detailed account of the interview that he had had with Gillman, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar concluded his protest with the following words : "The work of the conduct of an Indian paper is peculiarly onerous in this country. It has to perform a very disagreeable and perilous task, the fearless performance of which is of vital importance to the public welfare as well as in the interests of the Government. It has to criticize and sometimes condemn the acts and measures of the executive Government which is vested with the power under the law in force in this country of sitting in judgment over its own critics. The Government themselves would now feel from the volume of criticism and comment which has since appeared that the views set forth in the article in *The Hindu* are shared by a large mass of Indian opinion of indisputable weight. The Hon'ble Mr Gillman did not inform me under what provision of law he was acting in conveying to me the warning conveyed on behalf of the Government. If it should be the view of the Government that the article under reference falls under the terms of the Press Act and I am informed of the same in reply to this representation, I humbly think that the matter is of such public interest and importance as to require publication and the drawing of the attention of the intelligent public and of all those specially interested in the matter."

There was no response from the Government to this request.

*The editorial on the Ashe murder (June 19, 1911) condemned the outrage as a "heinous crime", "peculiarly heartless and revolting", a "most wanton and unprovoked outrage". It went on to condemn political terrorism as "entirely foreign to the instincts, sentiments and cherished convictions of the people of the land", and declared that it was the duty of the people as much as that of the Government, to strive their best to see that "the noxious growth of anarchical crime" did not obtain a foothold in the Presidency.

CHAPTER 14

OUT OF THE IVORY TOWER

The year 1916 was a momentous one for India. The major political organizations in the country—the National Congress and the Muslim League—were intent on presenting a united front to the British to secure political changes that would satisfy the aspirations of the people.

By 1916 a marked change had occurred within the Congress. The war itself had been partly responsible for this change. When the war started, the Dominions, India and the Colonies spontaneously rallied to the support of Britain. Repeated declarations by the Allied leaders and leaders of the Government in Britain that the war was being fought for making the world safe for Democracy and Freedom naturally brought the question of a re-arrangement of the relations between Britain and the Dominions and India to the forefront. India's loyal response had been praised by one and all, but although the future of the Dominions was being discussed in many quarters, nothing was being said about India. The public in India was impatiently waiting for a sign. Indian nationalist opinion of all shades was perturbed over Britain's silence. The vigorous group of Nationalists in the Congress led by Tilak and Mrs Besant was getting restive and at the Lucknow session of the Congress theirs was the voice that carried the day. The Moderates, who had dominated the Congress for nine years, became a minority and in later years felt so out of tune with the new temper of the Congress that they left it to form a separate Liberal Federation. The death of their leaders, Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta in 1915, also contributed to the weakening of the Moderate influence in the Congress.

It was well known about this time that the Viceroy himself was engaged in preparing proposals for constitutional reform. Many nationalist leaders felt that the time was opportune for bringing pressure on the Government to take a big step forward. The Congress and the Muslim League entered into negotiations for preparing a joint scheme for presentation to the Government. A joint conference of the Congress and League executives was held in April 1916, and again in November. An agreement was arrived at about the proposals for reform. "The essentials of the Congress-League Scheme itself were the subordination of the Executive to the Legislature, but it must be noted that the Legislature itself was still to consist of a one-fifth nominated element. The Secretary of State's Council was to be abolished. Altogether, it was, judging by the rapid strides since taken by the Congress, a poor show. Yet the Government fought shy of it and pitted against it a scheme of their own......"*

As a member of the All-India Congress Committee, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was one of those responsible for working out the details of the Congress-League Scheme. As a constitutionalist it was his favourite field and he devoted his energies to putting the scheme into shape. When it was approved by both the Congress and the League, he was a happy man and he wrote in his paper : "The concord reached at the joint session of the executive bodies of the two great organizations has paved the way for conjoint action of a kind which cannot but affect most profoundly the attitude of the Government towards the yearnings of Indians in regard to the future of the country...They give the lie direct to the false allegations of division and of ill-feeling between the Hindus and Mohamedans so often indulged in by Anglo-Indians, and proclaim that henceforth the

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Government cannot derive any strength to their policy of denying reforms on account of the alleged existence of differences between the communities."

The Congress-League Scheme was not perfect, as no scheme could be. Critics were not wanting, even among Congressmen, to find fault with parts of it. C. Vijiaraghavachariar, who had rejoined the Congress with Tilak, was one such critic. Though Vijiaraghavachariar was a close personal friend of his, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar felt that it was necessary that he should write a brief editorial note urging united support to the Congress-League scheme. Certain phrases in the editorial hurt Vijiaraghavachariar's feelings, and he wrote to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar expressing his unhappiness. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's reply speaks for itself :

29th October, 1917

> I am very sorry to hear from you that *The Hindu* has done you an injustice, that you have been represented by it 'as opposed to the entire Reform as advocated by the nation at large' and 'hostile to the country's attempt to get a reform'. This was very far from *The Hindu's* object. I felt it rightly or wrongly that at the present stage raising a controversy over the essential points of the scheme was not advisable, and that the duty of *The Hindu* was to express disagreement with the views which you have set forth, views which will derive great weight from your acknowledged position as a distinguished public worker. In the few lines of the editorial note, I thought *The Hindu* had expressed its dissent in a mild and courteous form. It seems to me a very far-fetched construction to attribute to it the idea that you were opposed to all reform. To avoid misconstruction, I have put in a short note today. I am not in the least annoyed with what you have written. You have no doubt said only what you feel. I do not myself feel that the Reform Scheme of the Congress and the Muslim League is the best that could have been framed. There is, however, a consensus of opinion among many of the best Indians, official and non-official, that we must stand by it as a body. If in

endeavouring to act upon this view, I have done you any injustice, I am truly sorry for it and must ask you to excuse me. As, however, the text of your speech has been published, I hope no great harm could result.

The enthusiasm created by the coming together of the Congress and the League led to an intensification of political activity in the country. In Madras, Mrs Besant's Home Rule movement spread like wildfire. Lord Pentland, who saw red in the rise of the new movement, let loose a series of repressive measures to put down the agitation. Mrs Besant, who was vigorously propagating her ideas in the columns of the *New India* and the *Commonweal,* was called upon to furnish security for her papers and the press in which they were printed. Altogether she deposited a sum of Rs. 20,000. As this did not deter her in any way from going ahead with her campaign, the Governor ordered the forfeiture of the securities. On June 15, 1917, this was followed by an internment order on Mrs Besant and her two lieutenants, G. S. Arundale and B. P. Wadia, giving them the choice of one of six places to reside in. Arundale and Wadia were interned at Coimbatore, while Mrs Besant was interned at Ooty in the Nilgiris.

The internment of the three leaders, instead of curbing the Home Rule agitation, only served to add fuel to the fire. Home Rule Leagues sprung up all over the country and Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the Muslim League leader, joined the Home Rule League. Despite Government surveillance, Mrs Besant continued to write freely to her papers. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the youthful advocate who had appeared for *The Hindu* in Mrs Besant's cases against that paper some years ago, had been drawn into the Home Rule movement and was devoting his time and talents to the organization of Home Rule Leagues everywhere.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was deeply disturbed by the

Government's actions against the Home Rule leaders. Mrs Besant, in his view, had done nothing more than create a new wave of political awakening in the country. While it was considered necessary, he wrote, to assuage the feelings of Ireland, which was on the war-path with blood and revolution, in the case of India, which was peace-minded and law-abiding, the officials seemed to be following a different policy. At a time when India was contributing her utmost for the success of the war effort, at a time when there was the dawn of a new hope in the country, at a time when statesmen had to correctly evaluate public opinion, it was highly regrettable, he said, that a policy of repression had been followed by the Madras Government.

Mrs Besant's internment left south India leaderless and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar felt that he should come out into the open to give the lead the public needed. Although he was of the view that the Editor of a newspaper should as a rule keep himself aloof from day to day politics, he felt that this was a time when no one could remain in an ivory tower and refrain from playing an active part in the nation's politics. From that time he was to be a respected leader of the Congress not only in the Presidency but at the all-India level as well. His emergence in this new role was signalized by his acceptance of the Presidentship of the Provincial Congress Committee in Madras.

To secure the release of the Home Rule internees, which had become an all-India cause, was the immediate aim for which the Congress and the Muslim League were working during the middle of 1917. A joint meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and the Council of the Muslim League was held in July to consider the situation. Resenting the repressive policy adopted by provincial Governments in Madras and elsewhere, the joint meeting decided that Provincial Congress Committees and the Council of the Muslim

League should consider the advisability of adopting Passive Resistance as a political weapon to secure the release of Mrs Besant and her co-workers.

The Madras Provincial Congress Committee, under the leadership of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, welcomed the move and adopted the following resolution : "Resolved that, in the opinion of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee, it is advisable to adopt the policy of Passive Resistance in so far as it involves opposition to all unjust and unconstitutional orders against the carrying on of constitutional agitation, and also against the prohibition of public meetings peacefully and constitutionally conducted to protest against the unjust and unconstitutional orders of internment and against the Repressive Policy of Government." It was further resolved that "a sub-committee be appointed to formulate and report within a fortnight on the practical steps by which effect may be given to the resolution of Passive Resistance adopted this day."

In the words of the historian of the Congress, Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya, "In the City of Madras, a pledge was drafted and S. Subramania Iyer, retired Judge of the Madras High Court, and Honorary President of the All-India Home Rule League and an old Congressman, was the first to sign the pledge. He had renounced his knighthood as a protest against the internment of Mrs Besant and her co-workers, and addressed a letter to President Wilson, which he sent by Mr and Mrs Hotchner. The next to sign the pledge was Mr S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Editor of *The Hindu,* a most unostentatious worker in public life, who had been devoting his talents, energies and resources to the great daily he had taken up, only to make it the greater by his assiduous work and undiluted nationalism. A few young men then signed the pledge."

An unexpected development, however, suddenly altered

the situation. In Britain, the Secretary of State for India, Austen Chamberlain, resigned and his place was taken by Edwin S. Montagu, a pronounced Liberal with broad sympathies. Soon after assuming office, Montagu made a declaration which was widely welcomed and which helped to transform the tense situation in India. Montagu also ordered the release of Mrs Besant and her co-workers.

The Madras Provincial Congress Committee met on September 28, 1917, and decided to postpone the consideration of Passive Resistance, and conveyed its views to the All-India Congress Committee.

CHAPTER 15

MONTAGU'S VISIT

The replacement of Austen Chamberlain by Edwin Montagu as Secretary of State for India came about somewhat dramatically.

While Indian leaders were consulting among themselves and presenting a united front, Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, took up the matter of constitutional reforms in right earnest. Despite his personal liberal predilections, he was restrained by the advice of his die-hard colleagues and the result was a scheme that was timid and halting in every respect. The Indian Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Sir Sankaran Nair, emphatically dissented from the proposals in a Minute which was welcomed all over India. The Viceroy's scheme did not secure support even from the Secretary of State for India, Austen Chamberlain, who too thought it inadequate. The Viceroy thereupon urged the Secretary of State to visit India to study the situation at first hand.

Before Chamberlain could decide on his Indian visit he had to resign following certain unexpected developments. The Mesopotamian campaign had been badly mismanaged and had ended in a fiasco. Inadequate supply of men and material was held to be the main cause of the disaster. The Government of India had been primarily responsible for this, though the overall responsibility vested in the Secretary of State for India. A Commission appointed to go into the question squarely blamed both the Secretary of State and the Viceroy. Chamberlain's bitterest critic in Parliament was Edwin S. Montagu, a young man of 38, who

had been Parliamentary Under-Secretary for India under Lord Morley and Lord Crewe. Montagu had also visited India and had given expression to progressive and lofty sentiments during his tour. In the course of the Commons debate on the Mesopotamian debacle, Montagu characterized the Indian Government as "far too wooden, far too iron, far too inelastic, and far too antediluvian to subserve its purposes in modern times". On another occasion, in a speech at the Guildhall, he declared : "There you have Conservative Imperialism at its worst. We are not there, mark you, to repair evil, to amend injustice, to profit by experience. We must abide by our mistakes, continue to outrage popular opinion for the sake of being able to say 'I have said what I have said.' I have in other places and at other times expressed freely my opinion on prestige. We must not hold India by invoking this well-mouthed word, we must hold it by just institutions and more and more, as time goes on, by the consent of the governed."

This speech was in reply to Bonar Law's criticism of the transfer of the Capital from Calcutta to Delhi and the annulment of the Partition of Bengal.

Austen Chamberlain resigned as a result of the Parliamentary criticism of the Mesopotamian campaign and Montagu was appointed Secretary of State in his place.

Montagu's assumption of office was widely welcomed in India, as he was believed to be a statesman possessing goodwill, courage and a first-hand knowledge of Indian conditions. India expected much from him, and true to expectations, he made an important announcement soon after taking office. Defining the goal of British policy in India as being Responsible Government for the country, Montagu announced on August 20, 1917 :

> The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the

> increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of Responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps should be taken in this direction as soon as possible.... I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and the advancement of the Indian peoples must be the judges of the time and the measure of each advance; and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility. Ample opportunity will be afforded for public discussion of the proposals which will be submitted in due course to Parliament.

Montagu also announced that he would shortly visit India to consult with the Viceroy and elicit Indian opinion.

Montagu's announcement had a warm reception in India. This, coupled with his ensuing visit, was considered as foreshadowing a great change in the political situation. While this was the prevalent opinion, Nationalists were not wanting who asked for clearer proof of British sincerity before they could applaud Montagu's declaration. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, belonging to the Nationalist school of thought, was hardly impressed. *The Hindu* came out with this editorial on August 21 : "It is an insipid, uninspiring and disappointing declaration which will cause keen dissatisfaction throughout the country. The Congress and the Muslim League demanded, and the Indian public since then have been asking, a definite announcement by His Majesty that it was the aim and intention of British policy to confer Self-Government on India at an early date and that a definite step should be taken by granting reforms contained in the Scheme accepted by those bodies. The frigid and cautious statement of Mr. Montagu, if it is a reply to that

united demand, must be pronounced to be a highly unsatisfactory declaration which cannot be expected to allay public discontent, much less to excite any enthusiasm among the people of India. The language employed is extremely vague. Everybody knows that British statesmen have been proclaiming for over a century-and-a-half that it is the policy of the Government to associate Indians more and more with the administration, every branch of it, and the further statement that it is their desire to develop gradually self-governing institutions in this country 'with a view to the progressive realization of Responsible Government as an integral part of the British Empire' does not take the problem very far.... The statement might have had some chance of relieving tension in India had it been accompanied by the release of persons interned on account of their close association with the constitutional agitation in India and by a relaxation of the repressive policy."

The weeks following Montagu's statement of August 20 were a period of anxious expectation and extreme suspense. While the Nationalists were clamouring for the release of Mrs Besant and other interned leaders, European-owned papers were hysterically threatening that there would be chaos and confusion in the country if they were released. These papers said that it would be impossible to maintain law and order if such agitators were released under Nationalist pressure, and that such an action would weaken respect for the Government. The European-owned Press went further and raised the bogey that high European officials in service would resign if the leaders were set free.

In spite of such scare-mongering, the Government thought fit to release Mrs Besant and her two co-workers, Arundale and Wadia, on the night of September 16. This was most unexpected and Nationalist circles were naturally very jubilant. A new wave of trust in Montagu swept the

land. *The Hindu* shared this feeling of elation, and said on September 18 : "There will be a thrilling sense of relief and joy among the Indian public throughout the country at the receipt of this news.... The result has showed the signal triumph of popular agitation in a just cause....Mr Montagu and Lord Chelmsford have laid the Indian public under a deep debt of obligation for their brushing aside the empty threats of Anglo-Indian reactionaries and for doing justice as demanded by the united voice of the people of India."

Mrs Besant was released at a time when the Indian National Congress was considering the choice of a President for its annual session in December to be held at Calcutta. As a spontaneous mark of recognition of her services, Mrs Besant was elected President for the session.

While preparations were going on for their annual sessions, both the Congress and the Muslim League were also making preparations to present their own proposals for political reform to the Secretary of State when he should visit India. Following the unity achieved at Lucknow, the executives of both the organizations met in a joint session and decided to present the Congress-League Scheme through a joint deputation to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. They also decided to postpone indefinitely all talk of passive resistance. Both Tilak and Mrs Besant attended this joint meeting.

The Montagu mission arrived in India in November 1917. Besides Montagu, the mission consisted of the Earl of Donoughmore, Charles Roberts M.P., Bhupendra Nath Basu, and Sir William Duke. The services of Sir William Vincent were lent to the mission by the Government of India. The mission, along with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, and his personal staff, toured the whole of India in the closing months of the year.

While the Congress and the League were pressing for the acceptance of their joint scheme and for the grant of early responsible government, other parties were advancing other plans. The Moderates, who had by now separated from the Congress, held the view that Montagu should be supported at all costs and that whatever reforms were granted should be accepted.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar actively canvassed support for the Congress-League Scheme. In private conversations, in public utterances and through his writings, he urged the presentation of a united front to the Montagu mission. He and A. Rangaswami Iyengar, Editor of *Swadesamitran*, prepared a memorandum for submission to the Secretary of State advancing the Congress-League point of view.

Montagu and Chelmsford arrived at Madras on December 14. Montagu's impressions of Madras, Governmental and otherwise, are contained in the entry in his *Diary* for the first day in the City* :

> *Friday, December* 14 : We arrived at Madras today at half-past one, and drove to the Government House in motor cars. Pentland met us at the station, and were cheered through the streets by the nearest approach of a welcoming crowd I have yet seen. Poor things, the people of India expect a great deal. Some are apprehensive, and hope that their apprehensions will not be realized, but most of them, in fact, everybody that shakes hands with me, believes that a new heaven is going to dawn upon earth, and I do not see that anything that we can do will be satisfactory to them.
>
> Madras has produced no contribution whatever to the discussion of the matters we have to deal with. The Government of India letters and circulars are answered on half sheets of note-paper; the whirlwind rages round them; political storms wax and menace, and they remain obstructive, angry, sullen, effortless.
>
> Nothing can exceed the beauty of Madras—the blue sea, the white buildings, the white-dressed people, the rich green

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vegetation, Government House itself set in a park, in parts English-like, with great spreading trees and lawns, in parts tropical, with groves of palm trees and herds of black buck feeding on the grass, and the sea beyond—the most lovely thing you can possibly imagine. And the dining-room on the first floor on a great verandah right open to the air with great pillars and green blinds, white and green ceiling, and tables spread on the black and white marble floor—it is a dream place."

From December 15, Montagu began receiving local deputations. He started off with meeting Sir Clement Simpson of Binny's. T. Earle Welby, Editor of *The Madras Mail,* met him on December 17. Indian Christian leaders, landholders' representatives, and zamindars met him on the 18th. Representatives of non-Brahmins, the Muslim League and non-League Muslims, and Mrs Annie Besant met him on December 19. The next day, a number of leading citizens met him including C. Vijiaraghavachariar, Hon'ble Mr B. N. Sarma, Hon'ble Mr V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and S. Subramania Iyer. Montagu also attended a tea at the Cosmopolitan Club as the guest of Sir C. Sankaran Nair. S. Srinivasa Iyengar and Dr T. M. Nair met Montagu on December 21. And, on the last day, the Rev. Mr Macphail, O. Kandaswami Chetty and Dewan Bahadur T. Desikachari had interviews with him.

The interview of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and A. Rangaswami Iyengar with Montagu is described in the following terms in Montagu's *Diary* :

Thursday, December 20 : ....After him I went to the Cosmopolitan Club as a guest of the Indian Member of the Executive Council and had tea with a lot of people. I had a long talk again with Sastri, who is going to be most helpful; and come home to see the Editor of *The Hindu* and the financial expert of the Congress party here, the Editor of *Swadesamitran.*

They neither of them understood the Curtis scheme, as their pamphlet showed, but one of them produced a pamphlet which, if true, contains the most crushing indictment of the Government of Madras for disallowing all sorts of legislation and resolutions, and therefore bringing this crisis upon themselves. . . ."

It was Kasturi Ranga Iyengar who presented the crushing indictment In the memorandum that he submitted to Montagu, he presented a long list of bureaucratic misdemeanours, and pressed for a thorough change in the administration. He pleaded for Responsible Government as the best thing for the country and wanted a system of Government similar to the parliamentary system in Britain to be inaugurated in India. He wanted the executive to be responsible to the representatives of the people in the legislature.

On December 21, a day after his interview with the Secretary of State, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar participated in an important provincial conference in the City. The Special Provincial Conference, which met in Madras while Montagu and Chelmsford were still in the City, was attended by all leading public men of the City, including the Hon'ble Mr B. N. Sarma, the Hon'ble Mr V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Dewan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai, B. V. Narasimha Iyer, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, G. A. Natesan, V. Chakkarai Chetty, Mohamed Yakub Hassan and Abdul Hameed Khan.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was Chairman of the Reception Committee and the Conference was presided over by K. P. Raman Menon of Calicut.

In his welcome address, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar advocated the adoption of the Congress-League Scheme and pointed out how experience of the Minto-Morley scheme of expanded Legislative Councils in Madras had proved utterly disappointing. In regard to the proposal in the Congress-League Scheme that the President of the Legislative Council

should not be the executive head of the administration of the province, he referred to the autocratic way the President of the Council in Madras, the Governor, had exercised the powers of wide discretion vested in him to the detriment of popular causes. Measures discountenanced by the judiciary and adopted by the Legislative Council, the working of the Press Act, and the official repressive campaign against the Home Rule movement were also referred to by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar in his address to prove that the existing system of bureaucratic administration had totally failed either to remedy wrongs or to afford satisfaction to the people. He finally urged that "unless the Executive Government is made subordinate to the Legislative Council and the latter made fully representative of the people, the essential improvement in the general administration which is now urgently called for cannot be brought about."

The Conference passed resolutions fully supporting the Congress-League Scheme and urging the Viceroy to grant an amnesty to all political offenders and release the Ali brothers.

Montagu's meetings at Madras had convinced him that Pentland's regime in the Presidency was wooden and totally out of tune with the times. An entry in Montagu's *Diary* on the penultimate day of his stay at Madras reads in part :

> *Saturday, December* 22 : ....I leave Madras with a heavy heart. It seems to be hopeless. Here, if anywhere, officials administrate and do not govern; here, if anywhere, they refuse to explain themselves and hold themselves aloof; here, if anywhere, they misuse powers, either their Press Act or their powers to disallow resolutions and Bills. Here they have caused their own situation. Madras is not the same place that it was five years ago. Brahmans and non-Brahmans, English and Indians—all have been set at loggerheads. We must have a vigorous Governor for Madras. Pentland does not know what is going on in his own Province. How can he know? He never discusses politics with these people....

Pentland, thin, whiskered, in tightly-buttoned frock-coat, large gardenia-like flower in his buttonhole, saw us off on the platform, looking what he is—an early Victorian Governor in post-war India."

How true this was, and how much it coincided with Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's own estimate of Pentland!

CHAPTER 16

A DISAPPOINTING DOCUMENT

The months following the visit of the Secretary of State to India were pregnant with great expectations. But as the months passed, it became clear that the millennium was not round the corner, and that, on the contrary, the old tragic story of Reform and Repression was likely to be repeated.

Even while the Secretary of the State was in India, the Government of India had appointed a committee under the Chairmanship of Mr Justice Rowlatt to investigate all the evidence bearing upon the sedition movement in India. There had been a number of terrorist outrages prior to 1914, particularly in Bengal, and during the War the Government had used their extraordinary war-time powers to intern persons on the barest suspicion. The public in India and elsewhere felt that the internments under the Defence of India Act had not always been based on sufficient evidence. The Government of India decided to appoint in December 1917 a Committee to investigate this charge. The Committee consisted of Mr Justice Rowlatt, the Chairman, and Mr Justice Provash Chander Mitter and Mr Justice C. V. Kumaraswami Sastri, members.

The proceedings of the Rowlatt Committee, instead of allaying fears, served only to deepen the apprehensions felt in nationalist ranks. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar felt that the object of the Government of India in appointing the Rowlatt Committee was not so much to assuage public fears as to discover some justification for putting on the statute book on a permanent basis regulations which had been introduced during the war years on an emergency

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basis. This would mean a new encroachment on the rights and privileges of the citizens.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and his friends felt that this dangerous move should be combated. They decided to form a Committee called The Indian Civil Rights Committee, which would educate public opinion not only in India but also in England. Dr S. Subramania Iyer, S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Mrs Annie Besant, C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, A. Rangaswami Iyengar and B. P. Wadia issued a joint statement inviting the attention of the public to the proposal to form the Committee and seeking the support of all men and women of the country.

"The necessity for such a step," the statement said, "must be obvious to those who have watched the action of the authorities in the matter of internments generally, and to those who have been following in particular the working of the Committee now sitting in Calcutta with Mr Justice Rowlatt as President. Apparently, the organizers of this Committee have in mind what in effect is similar to that which was attempted by the Government in or about 1909 when Regulation 3 of 1818, that barbarous relic of the East India Company's legislation, was made a part of the normal machinery of Government. In other words, it is the intention of the authorities, including the Government of Bengal, to procure an enactment which would enable them to exercise as a matter of ordinary procedure the power of imprisoning arbitrarily and without any sort of trial, those who unfortunately come under the suspicion of the police."

The Civil Rights Committee, the statement further said, would work for the most part in England, as it was only by agitating there that they could hope for success.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar wrote editorially in *The Hindu* : "It is perhaps an irony of fate that while proposals of far-

reaching constitutional changes in the Government of the country are under serious consideration, necessity should arise for the formation of such an organization.... Elementary and fundamental rights of person and property of the people are practically at the mercy of the Executive. The bulk of the people are ignorant of their rights, and while the more instructed of them are agitating for national freedom, its foundations which consist of individual liberty and freedom of action are being undermined by acts of executive irresponsibility. The numerous instances of arbitrary and oppressive acts of internment which are daily reported from Bengal are of a most harrowing description. All parts of the country have suffered and are suffering from the internment regulations being put in force on the most trivial grounds."

The Civil Rights Committee did not develop into a live force. But time and again the dangers feared by the Committee reared their head and Nationalist leaders had to raise their voices in defence of the basic liberties. Nearly two decades later Mr Jawaharlal Nehru started the Civil Liberties Union to fight against restrictions on the right of free speech and assembly.

While India's main interest was centred on the proposals for Reform, the war situation in Europe was becoming grave. In the spring of 1918, the Germans were preparing for a massive offensive to crush the Allies on the Western Front. The plan was to separate the French and British armies, to attack the British and completely destroy them, and then rout the French. This was the German plan, and Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, the German Commander-in-Chief, promised the German people that he would be in Paris by April 1. The great German attack began on March 31, 1918, on a 51-mile front, extending from Ypres southward. Indian troops sent to Europe were prominently

deployed on this front and people in India were eagerly following the course of the war in Europe. The news in the initial weeks was disheartening. Despite the stiff resistance of the Allies, the Germans made an advance of 27 miles in ten days. With a view to keeping the leaders of the public and the Press informed of the gravity of the war situation, Lord Chelmsford summoned a special War Conference at New Delhi on April 27. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was one of the invitees to the Conference. Almost all leaders except Tilak and Mrs Besant were invited and attended the Conference. Mahatma Gandhi was there.

The Conference extended its loyal support to the Government of India in the prosecution of the war and Indian Editors extended their full support to all measures intended to further the war effort.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and a number of other delegates wanted to move the following resolution on self-government :

> This Conference recommends that in order to evoke the whole-hearted and real enthusiasm amongst the people of India and successfully to mobilize the man-power and material and money, the Government in England should without delay introduce a Bill in Parliament meeting the demands of the people to establish responsible Government in India within a reasonable period which should be specified in the statute. We feel confident that the inauguration of this measure will alone make our people feel that they are fighting for their Motherland and for freedom and for the defence of their own rights in an Empire in which they possessed the same status as the other members thereof, and we are further sure that if the imagination of our country is captured and its enthusiasm encouraged, it can easily equip itself to be, in the language of the Premier, the bulwark which will save Asia from the tide of oppression and disorder.

The signatories to the resolution included, apart from Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Hassan Imam, Hon'ble Mr

Khaparde, V. J. Patel, Mohammed Ali Jinnah and A. Rangaswami Iyengar. The Viceroy ruled out the resolution.

The Delhi Conference and the attitude of the authorities to the resolution on responsible government convinced Kasturi Ranga Iyengar that not much was to be expected from the Government by way of reforms during the war period. The publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report in July 1918, confirmed this fear.

Though the Report contained a few new ideas, no far-reaching change in the constitutional status of India was envisaged. "No important change was proposed for the central executive, but legislation was entrusted to a new Assembly and Council of State, each of which had elected majorities, though they also contained an official *bloc*. The Viceroy was also left with the power of 'certifying' any legislation which he might feel necessary and which the Legislatures did not pass. The Provinces also had their Legislative Councils, elected on a wider franchise, and the Executive work was divided into two groups. The 'Reserved' subjects—including Finance and Law and Order—remained under the control of the Governor and his Councillors, but the other 'Transferred' subjects were entrusted to Ministers who were responsible to the Legislature."*

The proposals for divided executive responsibility in the provinces—the system of dyarchy as it was called—came under heavy fire, and the report as a whole was considered a great disappointment. *The Hindu* reflected nationalist sentiment in the country when it wrote on July 8, 1918: "The long-expected publication of the Reform proposals will be received by the Indian public with feelings of profound disappointment.... It casts a blight upon their

**Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India,* Thompson and Garratt, 1934

most cherished aspirations. It renders futile the pledges given by His Majesty's Government in their pronouncement of last August, and it gives an insulting response to the Indian National demand.... All the circumstances under which the present scheme of reforms has been launched show that it is a predetermination on the part of the authorities to give as little as possible of the right of citizenship to the people of this country, and to devise a system of self-government consisting of what may be called its shadow and not its substance.... In our opinion, the present proposals cannot constitute any scheme or part of a scheme of responsible Government. They violate the fundamental principle upon which popular governments are based in the civilized world, and form a new-fangled system wholly experimental in its aims and based upon an unfounded but deep-rooted distrust of the capacities and character of the people of the country. We are wholly unable to accept the position maintained in the Report that the powers of the Government of India, so far as popular control in respect of the same is concerned, are to remain intact, as such a position cuts at the root of any scheme for establishing a stage of responsible government either in Imperial or Provincial affairs."

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar joined a number of leading national workers in Madras to issue a manifesto expressing disappointment with the Reforms proposals. Signed by C. Vijiaraghavachariar, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, C. Rajagopalachari, S. Satyamurti, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, Dr T. S. S. Rajan and V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, the manifesto said in part: "The scheme is based on an unqualified distrust of the people of India and is so radically wrong alike in principles and in detail that in our opinion it is impossible to modify and improve it. Nor do we think it possible to devise any system of safeguards against

the mischievous working of the whole complex scheme. It cannot consequently form the basis of discussion or compromise by the people or their representatives."

The manifesto objected to the Princes' being associated with the Government of India, opposed the creation of a Council of State in the Centre, and urged that the proposed Legislative Assembly in the Centre "should possess powers suitable to a system of parliamentary Cabinet Government." The manifesto expressed total opposition to "the novel and startling idea of the powers of the Provincial Government being split up into two divisions in the way it has been done.... Any reform of the Provincial Governments should be effected as a whole and not by compartments." It opposed the creation of a Grand Committee in the Provincial sphere, and condemned the extraordinary powers given to the Governor to exclude any subject from discussion in the legislature.

Although the general sentiment was one of disappointment with the Montford Report, nationalist leaders were not unanimous in their opinion on details. Since a great variety of opinions was expressed by Congress leaders, it was considered essential that a Special session of the Congress should be summoned to discuss the Report. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was making preparations to attend the Special Congress in Bombay when an invitation from an unexpected quarter made him change his plans.

CHAPTER 17

JOURNEY TO BRITAIN

When the Great War was at its perilous worst, Lord Beaverbrook, the British Minister for Information, conceived the original idea of inviting members of the Press in the British Dominions, India and the United States to visit the theatres of war in Europe, so that they could see for themselves how the war was developing, and influence public opinion in their respective countries towards a better appreciation of the situation.

In August 1918, a representative team of five Editors from India was invited to visit Britain and the battle-fields on the Western Front. The Indian Press Deputation consisted of : J. A. Sandbrook, Editor, *The Englishman,* Calcutta; S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Editor, *The Hindu,* Madras; Hemendra Prasad Ghose, Editor, *Basumati* Calcutta; Gopal Krishna Devadhar, Editor, *Dhyan Prakash,* Poona; and Mahbub Alam, Editor, *Paisa Akhbar,* Lahore. The visit of the Indian Editors had been preceded by the visits of Editors from the United States and the Dominions.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was preparing to attend the Special Congress in Bombay when the invitation from the Government came. He had to decide whether to attend the Congress or to accept the invitation from Whitehall. The Congress session was expected to be an important one. It was being convened to discuss the Montford Report and take a decision on the reforms proposed in it. It was almost a foregone conclusion that the Report would be rejected. Many also doubted whether anything done in India would influence the authorities towards a modification of the proposals. Friends of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar felt that if he

accepted the invitation and visited England, his presence there might be helpful to the Indian nationalist cause. The visit, though intended to acquaint the Editors with the war situation, would enable him to impress the Indian point of view regarding the political situation on influential leaders in Britain.

There were other considerations also which he had to think of. One was the state of his health and his fitness to endure at his age what was bound to be an arduous trip. Apart from purely personal problems like arranging for vegetarian food during the long sea voyage, he had to consider the objections of relatives who did not favour the trip either because of the religious taboo on sea travel or the dangers from U-boat attacks on Allied shipping.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar ultimately overruled all the objections on the paramount consideration that the visit would serve the national interest and that therefore he should accept the invitation as a call of duty. The invitation was without conditions and he was free to speak out his mind on all occasions. He hoped to utilize the opportunity to create public opinion in Britain in favour of progressive reforms for India.

Madras was extremely pleased to hear about the invitation. On the eve of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's departure from the City to Bombay *en route* to England, a big meeting of the citizens was arranged to wish him *bon voyage*. The Madras Provincial Congress Committee, the Mahajana Sabha, the Home Rule League, the Madras Presidency Association and the Andhra People's Association held the meeting jointly.

The Hon'ble Mr B. N. Sarma, who presided, said that the occasion was a rare one when they were honouring a "distinguished citizen and a people's friend", who had been manfully advocating their cause for over fifteen years. At his ripe age, for one who was unaccustomed to foreign

travel and who came of an orthodox family, it was no small sacrifice to leave the editorial arm-chair for a risky voyage in troubled seas. He was going out at the call of duty. "We are met here," Mr Sarma said, "to arm him with that authority and that power" derived from the confidence and unique honour shown by five national bodies representing Southern India.

An address read on behalf of all the participating associations expressed the hope that as a result of his visit, "British statesmen will really begin to look at India from a new angle of vision, not as 'the white man's burden' but as a willing and cheerful partner in the Empire anxious to share all the responsibilities if only she be taken as a real partner." He was urged to remind British statesmen that "Britain cannot deny to the people of India that for which she is herself fighting in Europe and in the fight for which she had been helped by India's blood and treasure." Kasturi Ranga Iyengar assured the audience that he would deem it his duty to convey their views to the highest in Britain.

Writing on the invitation to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and on the meeting to wish him godspeed, Mrs Besant's *New India* said : "Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar holds easily a very high place among the Indian journalists who have contributed not a little to the public life and the formation of influential public opinion in this country. He is leaving the country at a very critical time in its history, as well as that of the world. Though the mission on which he goes is not primarily connected with Indian Imperial politics, we have no doubt that he will be consulted in England on Indian matters, especially about the Reforms now before the country and his opinions will be received with all the respect due to them."

Leaving Madras on August 23, 1918, Kasturi Ranga

Iyengar arrived at Bombay on August 25, where he joined the other members of the delegation. At Bombay, he had informal talks with Hindu and Muslim leaders. He also visited the Congress camp, where work was going on for holding the next session of the Congress, and met several Congress workers. A distinguished gathering saw him off at the Alexandra Docks the next day. It included V. P. Madhava Rao, Mrs Annie Besant, B. P. Wadia, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, T. Prakasam, S. Satyamurti and T. V. Gopalaswami Mudaliar.

On the first day of the voyage, the sea was rough and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar suffered from seasickness. But by the time the boat reached Aden, he was all right. An entry in his diary describes Aden thus :

September 1, 1918 :

Aden is all rock. No trees or other vegetation. The town is very interesting. The population is about 30,000. Aden looks like an Indian town with a population of all classes of Indians. Visited the Tanks, an ancient structure, but empty. They collect rain water when there is rain, which is very seldom. Had breakfast in the Postmaster's house. The Postmaster is a Bombay Madhwa, belonging to Dharwar.

The voyage through the Red Sea was trying, because it was "as hot as in Madras". Kasturi Ranga Iyengar spent most of the time on deck, where he met several European fellow-passengers. He found that some of them were as keen on chess as himself. He played many games with them and won all of them.

Reaching Suez on September 6, the Editors from India took the train to Port Said, which they reached the same night. In Port Said, a disagreeable surprise was in store for them. The diary entry says :

September 7, 1918 :

Saw the Embarkation Commandant who has had no instructions as to when and how we should embark. Arranged with

him for a visit to Cairo. At first declined to permit his Assistant to accompany. After a second representation by me personally, this was allowed. Permission seems a matter of great difficulty at present.

The Editors soon learnt that owing to some bungling somewhere, the authorities in Port Said had had no information whatsoever of the impending arrival of a Press deputation from India. The officials did not know what to do with the party and they did nothing. The Editors were thus stuck up in Port Said for more than three weeks. This was in contrast to their experience at Suez, where the Embarkation staff had been forewarned and were well set to receive the visiting Editors and speed them on their way.

The Editors spent this enforced period of leisure in sightseeing and meeting the local Editors at Cairo. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's diary tells the story :

September 8, 1918 :

Left Port Said at 8 a.m. and reached Cairo at 1-10 p.m. Drove to Shepheard's Hotel, a big institution in which good vegetarian food is supplied, though the charges are high. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, with the help of a guide went in a tram to the Pyramids, rode on camels from the tram terminus to the foot of the Pyramids and the Sphinx. After visiting the Pyramids we had a group photo of us taken as we were on camel back. Also a single photo of myself on a camel. Drove back to the Hotel in the tram. Crossed the Nile to and from the Pyramids.

Cairo is a fine, ancient city of unique historic and legendary interest. Its population is of very mixed character and presents an opulent appearance. The War seems to have caused general prosperity among the people, chiefly among the agriculturists.

September 9, 1918 :

Saw the European Officer in charge of the English Department who obtained permits for our seeing the Citadel, etc. Muhamad Ali's structure in the Citadel is a magnificent structure, very imposing and beautiful in design and artistic excellence. Saw also the manager of the Agricultural Bank, the Editor of *The Egyptian Mail*, an Englishman, and the Editor of an Arabic paper (a Syrian Christian), both well-informed men. Political activity has died out since the War began. The Legislative Assembly has not met. The Censor has to read every newspaper and pass it before it is issued. Internments and deportations are in vogue.

A week passed, and the diary entry repeated with some irritation : "Still at Port Said. No news of the steamer to take us to Taranto in Italy. The delay is extremely annoying."

At last, after twenty-three days of waiting at Port Said, word was received that they could embark for Italy. The British Ministry of Information had moved at last, the Italian Government had intimated its consent to the Editors' landing in Italy, the Cairo authorities had arranged a ship, and the Base Commandant did the rest with full speed.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's diary reads :

September 29, 1918 :

Got on board at 4 p.m. much to our relief. "Malwa" is a large boat, well equipped.

September 30, 1918 :

"Malwa" weighed anchor at 4 p.m. Drilling with lifebelts. Boat No. 8 station allotted. Its number is 338. All passengers very nervous. Two steamers and two destroyers in convoy. Felt giddy for some hours, but good sleep afterwards.

Speeding across the Mediterranean, s.s. *Malwa* reached Taranto in the southern tip of Italy on October 5. The Army officials here received the visitors with marked cordiality and showed them round the vast military installations at the place for the embarkation of troops to Palestine, Syria and other places in Asia and Africa.

Recalling some of their common experiences during this trip and the impressions he had formed of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar at this time, G. K. Devadhar, the Marathi Editor in the party, wrote : "He had armed himself with a large quantity of condiments, fruits and *appalams,* whose real food value can only be appreciated when we are far from our dear homes. We always shared the same table, being the only two vegetarians in the party, and our vegetarianism proved rather costly to the Government as in some of the

towns in the West fresh vegetables were dearer than meat. But Kasturi Ranga Iyengar always had his dishes full of these fried *appalams* and *vadams* and I used to have a large share of them, as he knew my weakness for these. He had also taken with him a large quantity of fruit which he never ate by himself but always shared with me largely......

"While we were at Port Said, he felt restless at the way in which we were treated by the officers in charge of the formation of the convoy and the Passport Office. While in this place, owing to some mishap, a large quantity of pickles which he carried in big trunks was damaged and it was more of a shock to me than to him, because I felt I would not relish my meals, but he was not disturbed. He was sorry the loss of the articles might cause a lot of discomfort to me, as though all the things he carried were meant for my use.

"One day while at one of the railway stations, we all felt hungry and got from the restaurant some chops of brinjal, fried. Their look was somewhat uncommon, and after we had enjoyed them, my assistant, who always wanted to make a joke of our vegetarianism, wanted to tease him by saying that what we ate was not vegetable. This worried poor Kasturi Ranga Iyengar for a long time. He asked me often whether there was anything wrong, but my assurance did not give him sufficient peace which he could get only after a sound sleep......

"He was in manners polite, and in dress and demeanour very neat and tidy. We one day drove in a victoria through the streets of Taranto, the southernmost part of Italy where we landed at the end of our extremely anxious voyage for four most anxious days through the Mediterranean attended with all phases of possible risks to our lives. The gold lace of his turban and *dhoti* and of my *pugree* attracted the attention of several urchins and women in the streets. The

mirth of these little urchins and boys in the streets and also of the women from the windows, who called us Rajahs, added to the humour of the situation. We all said 'Yes, we are Rajahs'. Italians, who were quite oriental in their sentiments, associated gold and bright colours with kingship."

Leaving Taranto, the party reached Rome on October 7. After a day there they entrained for Paris. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's diary says :

> *October* 8, 1918 :
>
> The journey to and from Rome on the railway is along the coast and is a very pleasant one through Genoa and other places. On one side the sea, and on the other the mountains. There are very long tunnels. Beautiful villas with gardens and vineyards are to be seen throughout.
>
> Arrived at Paris at 12 noon. Had a drive round the city. Saw the Eiffel Tower. A grand city.

From Paris, the Editors proceeded to London *via* Boulogne and Folkestone, arriving in the capital of the Empire on October 10. They were received at Folkestone by a Capt. Salt and in London by a Bombay Civilian Officer, Mr Clayton. The Editors went to the Ministry of Information in Fleet Street and to the India Office, where they met Bhupendra Nath Basu, who was Adviser to the Secretary of State for India. Representatives of the London Press had interviews with them. All London papers carried the news of their arrival. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar met his friend H. S. L. Polak, who took him to a vegetarian restaurant and later to a cinema, which Kasturi Ranga Iyengar described as a "novel and interesting" experience.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was greatly impressed by the identity of interests and co-ordination of effort between official and non-official agencies that was apparent in Great Britain. He visited one of the world's largest aircraft production factories at Hendon and took a ride in a

Handley-Page aeroplane, which flew over London and suburbs at a height of 3,200 feet and at a speed of between 65 and 75 miles an hour. In the afternoon he went to the House of Lords and watched Lord Sydenham putting interpellations on Indian Reforms.

That same night, there was a reception in honour of the visiting Editors arranged by the Institute of Journalists. In an enthusiastic speech, J. L. Garvin, President of the Institute, welcomed the Editors and dwelt on the great part played by Indian troops in the war. He referred in particular to the way in which Indian troops had helped to hold the thin line at Ypres, which effectively checked the onward rush of the German army. Garvin declared that the loyalty and enthusiasm of the Indian people in supporting the Allies in their fight for freedom had welded an indissoluble bond between India and the rest of the Empire.

Lord Burnham, past President of the Institute, announced that the Indian Editors had been enrolled as Fellows of the Institute.

In his reply to the toast, after thanking the Institute for the honour done to him and his brother-journalists, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar pointed out that neither the press of Great Britain nor the people of England had hitherto paid any attention to the expressions of opinion by the Indian press even on matters of supreme importance to India. It was a good augury that the Government and the press in Great Britain seemed disposed at the present time to accord a warm recognition to the potentialities of the organs of Indian opinion. There were grave problems concerning India's political and industrial conditions which were awaiting solution at the hands of British statesmen. The Indian people had made great strides in the path of national development and progress, and the Indian press looked forward with confident hope to their brethren of the British

press for co-operation in their endeavours to realize the aims and ideals of the people of India.

While the Editor of *The Hindu* was thus expressing satisfaction at the recognition given to the Indian press, he was not aware that at that very moment his own paper and three other nationalist Indian papers—*New India, The Bombay Chronicle* and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*—were banned entry into Britain! The ways of officialdom were strange indeed. Here was the Editor of *The Hindu* an honoured guest of the British Government, while his paper was kept out of the country!

On October 16, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar went to the India Office, had a look at the Library and then had a brief meeting with Montagu, the Secretary of State for India. Montagu fixed the next day for individual interviews lasting 15 minutes each with the Editors. The entry in the diary is very brief:

October 17, 1918:

At 6 p.m. had a short interview with Mr Montagu who said he would convert me to his views in another interview.

From other sources we learn that the topic of discussion was naturally the Reforms scheme. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar complained to Montagu that his whole scheme was framed on the basis that the Indian people were unfit for self-government at the present stage. He also pointed out that there was no means of redress in the scheme for grave administrative abuses. He instanced several illustrative cases of gross injustice done to Indians by British officials and argued that the Reforms scheme did not provide remedies for such cases.

Montagu had to break off the interview abruptly and suggested that they should meet again to complete the discussion. But that did not take place, though Kasturi

Ranga Iyengar had occasion to meet Montagu once or twice after that.

The next day, the Indian Editors visited the security press where postage and other stamps were being printed. They also went to Watford where currency notes were being produced. In the evening, the National Indian Association gave a reception at which Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had the pleasure of meeting Lord Carmichael, former Governor of Madras, and an old friend.

October 19 was an important day. The Editors were received individually by King George V and Queen Mary at Buckingham Palace. During his audience with the King and Queen, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar gave His Majesty a copy of the address presented to him by various public bodies on the day of his departure from Madras. He emphasized that the contribution of India to the Allied war effort would have been far greater had she been properly developed in earlier years. In the course of the interview, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar got the impression that His Majesty entertained the view that the people of south India were unfit for military service. He pointed out to His Majesty that the information was not correct; the war had conclusively proved that south India's contribution to India's armed forces overseas had been quite considerable.

CHAPTER 18

VISIT TO THE WAR FRONT

From London, the Indian Editors went north, to Edinburgh, where they saw units of the British Fleet. Here are some entries in Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's diary during this week :

October 22, 1918 :

After breakfast visited the Grand Fleet near Forth Bridge. Went on board a battle-ship, a cruiser and a destroyer. Naval officers very cordial and amiable. Had lunch and afternoon tea with them. Met two Indian students at Edinburgh after return to the hotel.

October 23, 1918 :

The Lord Provost of Edinburgh and some others welcomed us at the hotel and arranged for our visiting the Castle, the Palace and other places of interest.... In the evening, the members of the Edinburgh Indian Students Union welcomed us and gave us tea. We started for Glasgow at 6-30 p.m. and reached there at 8-30 p.m.

October 24, 1918 :

Visited a Government aerodrome factory and munitions factory at George Town which employ 15,000 workers of whom 13,000 are girls. The industrial activity in these places is truly gigantic. I told Mr Luke of John Brown & Co of the state of things in India.

October 25, 1918 :

Went in the morning to see the working of the municipal system of government which is very advanced in the city in various respects. The sewage disposal system, the refuse disposal, and the drainage system and factory are quite admirable.

From Glasgow the Editors proceeded to Carlisle, where a remarkable system of checking excessive drinking among the citizens was being tried by the Liquor Control Board. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar evinced great interest in the Carlisle experiment and felt that it was something India might copy profitably.

The Editors also visited Chester, Manchester and Birmingham. At Birmingham they visited a factory producing tanks, which made their appearance for the first time in World War I. The diary says :

> *October* 30, 1918 :
>
> Went in the morning to the Metropolitan Works in which "tanks" are built, and rode in one of them. The tank was first built in February 1916, and used in the War in September.
>
> The firm also manufactures aeroplane frameworks. The factory is a huge one. Ordinarily used for making railway wagons and carriages imported into India.

Returning to London, the Editors were given a lunch by the Royal Society of Literature at which Lord Lamington, a former Governor of Bombay, presided. Sir Francis Younghusband, President of the Society, suggested at the lunch that societies should be formed in various Indian cities for the promotion of good understanding between Indians and Englishmen and for encouraging the study of English language and literature by Indians. While one of the Editors declared his readiness to undertake this mission in his province, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar said that he did not see the need for forming such institutions in India. The English language and literature were widely studied by Indians in the existing universities. The real need, he urged, was for Englishmen to get acquainted with the Indian languages, modes of thought and culture. in view of the profound ignorance of Indian conditions which existed among them. He added that in a few plays which he had witnessed in

London he had noticed a gross misrepresentation of Indian customs, manners and modes of living which it was humiliating for an Indian to witness but which English audiences might be led to think was a true portrayal of what was obtaining in India. It was necessary, therefore, that institutions should be set up in Great Britain to disseminate correct information regarding Indian manners and customs and popularize the study of Indian languages and literature.

At a reception given to them by the Empire Press Union, of which Lord Burnham was President, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar said that during their visit to England they had throughout received gratifying evidence of goodwill. They had everywhere seen abundant proof of the mighty forces of the Empire and the gigantic efforts that the people had been making for the successful prosecution of the war. He regretted, however, that even among the leading citizens of the metropolis and in other parts of the country, there was little awareness of the great problems that awaited solution in India. He was glad to hear the statement of Lord Burnham that the journalists of India would be welcomed to the Council of the Empire Press Union and for his remarks as to the necessity for mutual understanding between the journalists of Great Britain and India. But the great journalists of Britain, he said, seemed to be unaware of the conditions of journalism in India. For instance, some of the leading newspapers of India, including the principal Indian newspapers in Madras were not allowed to come to Britain. Such unawareness of conditions in India, he pointed out, was likely to continue unless the Indian press had a permanent delegation in London charged with the duty of publicizing facts about India.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar thus missed no opportunity to speak out in private talks and at public receptions about conditions in India and the need for a better appreciation

of the nationalist sentiment in the country. Such outspoken expressions of opinion by the Indian Editors were not relished by British reactionary elements in England and India. A Tory die-hard Member of Parliament, Mr Joynson-Hicks, raised in the Commons the question of "the desirability of imposing some restrictions on the propaganda work of the Indian newspaper representatives now visiting the country". The Secretary of State firmly refused to do this. The five Indian Editors, he said, had come to England on exactly the same conditions as the Dominions' journalists and no restrictions would be placed on them.

In India, adverse comments on the Editors' expressions of opinions were published in some European-owned papers. But nationalist India was warm in its appreciation of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's work. The *Mahratta* commented : "Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's writings were banned entry into England, though his speeches were allowed. They have thus barred the cage and let go the lion !"

At the end of its visits to war establishments in Britain, the Indian press deputation was taken on a trip to the battle-fronts in France and Belgium. The Editors left for France on November 2, 1918. They stayed there for six days and covered about 900 miles, mostly by motor transport. They passed through hundreds of miles of destruction and witnessed scenes of utter desolation. They visited the spots where Indian troops had excelled in acts of bravery and heroism which had won admiration from Allied Generals.

At the time of the Editors' visit, the tide had turned decisively against Germany and the Allies were victoriously pursuing the Kaiser's armies. German resistance was crumbling, and the War was in its last stages. The Editors saw British guns firing at the retreating enemy at ranges less than ten miles, and were present at the brilliant

victory of Le Quesnoy, which opened the way for the Allied advance through the great Mormal Forest. Le Quesnoy saw probably one of the last great battles of the War.

The War ended on November 11. while the Editors were in London. They shared with the British public the relief and the joy that the four-year long Armageddon was over.

The programme which the Ministry of Information had arranged for the visiting Editors practically ended, with their visit to the war front, although there were a few more functions which they attended after their return to London. The Editors had some time on their hands and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar utilized it to meet Lokamanya Tilak, who was just then in London for conducting his libel suit against Sir Valentine Chirol. The two leaders met on several occasions and discussed what best could be done in England to improve India's political prospects. The entries in the diary during this period reveal the nature of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's activities.

November 9, 1918 :

Lord Mayor's procession in the afternoon. A showy pageant, set off by the news of the victory of the Allies in the War.

November 10, 1918 :

Met Mr Tilak at his quarters.

November 11, 1918 :

Met Mr Tilak at the Hyde Park Hotel. Met him at his office and had a talk with him about the British Committee of the Congress, and other matters.

News of the signing of the Armistice received by the London people with great rejoicing and hilarious scenes.

The West India Society, whose members were sugar-cane planters in the West Indies, gave a lunch to the Indian Editors. In the speeches which some of its members made on the occasion, the visitors were invited to British Guiana

to understand and appreciate how well Indians in that colony were being treated by the planters. Replying to the speeches, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar pointed out that the treatment of Indian labourers in the colonies and dependencies was a great scandal, that there was ample scope for employing Indian labourers in their own country, and that a movement was afoot in India to discourage by all legitimate means the emigration of Indian labour to distant colonies. He admitted that he was gratified to hear about the attention and consideration the planters in the West Indies bestowed on Indian labourers; but the question of emigration of Indian labour was one of immense economic importance. It was also one which involved considerations of national self-respect. He concluded by observing that it was not a pleasing sight for any self-respecting Indian to find that in many places outside India, to which he might happen to travel, his countrymen occupied the lowest occupations while invariably all the higher positions were filled by men of other races.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was preoccupied with political problems during the closing days of his stay in London. His talks with Tilak and others related mainly to the steps that should be taken by the British Committee of the Congress as well as by individuals to keep the British public adequately and accurately informed about developments in India. The British Committee of the Congress, sustained by funds from the Indian National Congress in India, had been in existence in London for some years. But at the time of the Editors' visit, the Committee had been very inactive and had not cared to make use of the Indian Editors' presence for furthering its work in England. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and other members of the deputation pressed the Acting Secretary of the Committee to arrange a meeting so that the Editors could get an idea of the nature of the work

the Committee was doing. It was also suggested that Mr Tilak be invited to attend the meeting. However, at this meeting, which took place on November 20, only three or four members of the Committee were present. Tilak was not present as no invitation had been sent to him. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar found that the British Committee of the Congress had been more or less moribund at a time when the reactionary anti-Indian propaganda of the Indo-British Association in London called for a vigorous counter-offensive.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar felt that the Committee, which was supported by Indian funds, ought to bestir itself and make its presence felt. He therefore sent a note to the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Indian National Congress, which was to meet that year in Delhi, making several recommendations for the better utilization of the services of the British Committee.

The Indian Editors spent in all about a month in London after their return from the war front. They were scheduled to leave for India on December 10 by s. s. *Somali*.

The entries in his diary during the period of waiting for passage show how Kasturi Ranga Iyengar made the best use of the time :

November 26, 1918 :

Attended a meeting of the Britain and India Association. Sir William Duke read a paper 'Indian Reforms Step by Step'. Lord Shaw presided. No discussion was permitted.

November 27, 1918 :

Saw Mr D. T. Chadwick, Trade Commissioner of the Government of India, a department in the making. If properly developed and organized, it should become a useful institution.

Paid a visit to Lord Morley and had a long conversation. He is old and feeble but keeps a lively interest in Indian affairs.

November 28, 1918 :

Saw Mr Tilak and had breakfast at his place. Signed communication about the Congress Committee and India.

Attended a lecture given by Mr Basu on "Some Aspects of Hindu Life".

November 29, 1918 :

Attended a lecture by Mr Bernard Shaw, Mrs Sidney Webb presiding.

November 30, 1918 :

Attended a meeting at the Royal Albert Hall, a Labour demonstration and speeches. Mr Lansbury presided. Resolutions were passed, one of which was to make the *Labour Herald* a daily paper.

December 2, 1918 :

Paid a visit to Lord Carmichael and had a long conversation on the Reforms scheme and other matters.

December 3, 1918 :

Saw Mr A. G. Gardiner of the *Daily News* and had a talk. He relies for his information on Indian affairs on Mr Cotton and Mr Ratcliffe. Has not much belief in Mr Montagu, who is after office-seeking, he said.

December 6, 1918 :

Saw Mr Tilak who strongly urged my extending my stay. Went to the Home Rule Office.

December 7, 1918 :

Paid a visit to Lord Haldane, who favours the view that Provincial Governments in India should be under the direct supervision of Parliament. About Indian lawyers, he wants to place them on a more respectable position, so that an Indian may become Chief Justice. Indian sub-judges are more efficient than European barrister judges.

December 8, 1918 :

Met Mr Tilak, Mr Ispahani and others. Mr Polak came in the morning.

December 9, 1918 :

Left London for Devonport.

December 10, 1918 :

Boarded the s.s. *Somali* at 11 a.m. Not sailing today. "Somali", a military transport ship bound for Australia, taking soldiers, touches at Colombo. Food fairly good, better than in most places yet visited.

December 11, 1918 :

Weighed anchor at 9 a.m. Entering Bay of Biscay, sea very rough. Seasick from the afternoon.

The journey from Devonport to Colombo was uneventful except for the revelry on board on Christmas Day, and a water spout off Malta.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Hemendra Prasad Ghose disembarked at Colombo on January 7, 1919. According to *The People* of Colombo, "a large number of Indian residents and not a few Ceylonese assembled at the jetty to give them a hearty welcome". A deputation from the Indian Association and the Secretary of the Indian Merchants Association were present to receive the two Indian Editors.

In an interview given to *The Ceylon Daily News,* Kasturi Ranga Iyengar gave a brief account of his meetings with various leaders of opinion in Britain. He was keen to know about Ceylon's fight for reforms. He said that in his opinion it was perhaps best for Ceylon to federate with India. On Indian emigration abroad, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who was President of the Anti-Indenture Society, said with firmness that Indians should remain in India which was as yet very largely under-developed.

A public meeting was arranged on January 9 at the Town Hall, Colombo, to hear Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Hemendra Prasad Ghose speak on their European visit. Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam presided.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar spoke about his experiences in England and France and referred to the war effort and the industrial development in Great Britain. He declared that

England had not done what it could have done to develop the material resources of India. It seemed to him that until Indians took matters into their own hands there could be no possibility of any great material advancement in India. That applied to Ceylon also.

The South Indian United Association, Colombo, representing the Depressed Classes, presented a welcome to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar as the Vice-President of the Depressed Classes Mission, Madras. The address read on the occasion expressed appreciation of the work done by him to improve the status of the Depressed Classes in India and hoped that his experiences in England, a land of freedom, would have increased and strengthened his sympathy for the Depressed Classes. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, in his reply, said that he had never expected such a warm welcome at Colombo. He hoped the time would come soon when it would no longer be possible for anyone to say that Indians did not treat any section of their own people as equals.

The two Indian Editors left Colombo for Dhanushkodi, and after spending two days there, left for Madras by train on January 11. The journey from Dhanushkodi to Madras was marked by a series of enthusiastic receptions for Kasturi Ranga Iyengar at several wayside stations. He had to break journey at a number of places and attend the receptions arranged by local Congress Committees and citizens' committees.

Typical of these receptions was the one at Madurai. As soon as the train carrying him arrived, the waiting crowd on the platform cheered him and shouted *Vande Mataram.* He was taken to the Victoria Edward Hall, where a reception had been arranged by the citizens. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was received with temple honours by a priest from the Meenakshi temple. Inside the hall, he was greeted with a tremendous ovation. In the address presented to him, the

citizens expressed gratification at his safe return and welcomed him back to his "continuous labour of shaping opinion and lending counsel in a time of anxiety and rapid growth". In his reply, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar said that the people in Great Britain were grateful for India's contributions to winning the War, but British statesmen were "much in the stage of groping in the dark as regards Indian problems". It was, therefore, the duty of Indians "to act under all circumstances in a spirit of self-reliance, manliness and independence".

Similar addresses of welcome were presented at Tiruchi, Tanjore, Kumbakonam, Mayavaram, Chingleput and Chetput.

A mammoth reception awaited him on his arrival at Madras. A large gathering had assembled at Egmore station to accord a hero's welcome to him. As his train steamed into the station, shouts of *Vande Mataram* went up. He was received by the Hon'ble Mr B. N. Sarma, N. Subba Rao Pantulu, C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, B. P. Wadia, the Hon'ble Mr Yakub Hassan, the Hon'ble Mr T. Rangachari, A. Rangaswami Iyengar and other leading citizens of Madras. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Hemendra Prasad Ghose were conducted in a procession to an enclosure arranged on the platform.

An address of welcome on behalf of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee, the Mahajana Sabha, the Home Rule League, the Andhra People's Association and the Madras Presidency Association, the five public bodies which had given him a combined send-off when he had left for the West, stated that although little news of his doings in England had been allowed to reach them, they had "read with cordial appreciation the few outspoken deliverances which were permitted to slip through the censor's nets". They had "heard with surprise and resentment that though

you were invited by the Government as the Editor of *The Hindu,* your own paper was not allowed to reach you, and that *New India* was also intercepted. Strange that the country of Milton should be so afraid of truth."

Thanking the various associations for their welcome, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar said: "The resultant impression on my mind of my trip to Europe is one of admiration at the immensity of the resources of Great Britain and other countries and a feeling of sadness at the fallen fortunes of our ancient land, its undeveloped condition and its low economic and political position. Such a state of things is bound to kindle the fire of patriotism in the breast of the most indifferent Indian, and I would earnestly recommend a European travel to every rich Indian, for it would stimulate him to put forth his best endeavours for his country's uplift." He told them that as required by them in the address that they had given him on the eve of his departure he had the honour and privilege of placing before Their Majesties, the King and Queen, a copy of their address.

Other points made by him were :

"Work on behalf of India would have been much facilitated and borne better results if the deputation of Indian leaders resolved upon by the Special Congress at Bombay had been allowed to proceed to England, and myself and other Indian Editors had had the benefit of their co-operation.... It was a political phenomenon, the significance of which still remains a mystery, that papers like *The Hindu, New India, Bombay Chronicle* and *Amrita Bazar Patrika* were not allowed free circulation in England, while the Anglo-Indian papers and Moderate Indian papers such as *Bengalee* and *The Leader* were allowed free entry. The Secretary of State for India, who had undertaken to obtain and give the explanation for this abnormal state of things, had not been able to obtain the required information

by the time I left England. I hope we shall yet get a clue to the mystery.... My present conviction is that the position which Indian problems occupy in the mind of the British public is such that the need is more urgent than ever it has been, for the best minds of India, devoting their attention to promote the national interest, to show unity of action, harmony in aims and ideals, and unstinting efforts."

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Hemendra Prasad Ghose were then taken in procession in an "ivory white carriage" to the accompaniment of *nadaswaram* music. Orthodox Brahmins welcomed Kasturi Ranga Iyengar with traditional *poorna kumbham* and offer of temple *prasadam.* Though it was very much like a hero's home-coming, the return was not without a touch of sadness. During his absence in England, a dreadful influenza epidemic had taken a heavy toll in Madras and several relatives of his had been victims of the scourge. In his own family he had lost a daughter-in-law and a sister; in the house of his elder brother, Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar, his brother's wife had passed away, preceded by her eldest son, one of her daughters, one of her grandsons and his wife, all within a fortnight. It saddened Kasturi Ranga Iyengar to miss so many loving and familiar faces in the family circle.

CHAPTER 19

THE PUNJAB TRAGEDY

While Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was on his way to England, the Special Congress met at Bombay on August 29, 1918, under the presidentship of Syed Hassan Imam. It was convened solely to discuss the Montagu-Chelmsford Report proposals. Even before the Congress met, there were rumours that the Congress would reject the proposals. This led the Moderates in the Congress, who were keen on co-operating with the Government to work the reforms, to consider whether it was not time they left the Congress to organize a new party of their own. For the second time since Surat, there was a large-scale exodus from the Congress; this time it was the Moderates who went out.

On his return from England, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar found that the Moderates were preparing to profit from their co-operation with the Government and were getting ready to accept official positions under the Reforms scheme. The Government were no doubt pleased with this prospect. For their part, they were busy strengthening their own hands by passing repressive laws to put down nationalist opposition. The first two of these, the Rowlatt Bills as they were called—the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill and the Indian Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill—were introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council in January 1919.

Protests were organized all over the country against the introduction of the Bill. At Madras, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar presided over the meeting that was arranged to denounce the Bill. In his speech, he questioned the need for the legislation and described the action as a

betrayal of India, which had contributed so unstintingly to the success of the Allies in the War. "It is an irony of fate", he said, "and it is one of the grave symptoms of the evil of the present form of Government in this country, that at a time like this, soon after the victorious close of a war whose dire consequences have convulsed the whole world and in which India as a part of the British Empire has borne a considerable share in the sufferings and sacrifices that were necessary to achieve victory, legislation should be proposed in this country which gravely imperils the elementary rights of every British Indian citizen. It is a humiliating position which must arouse feelings of indignation and resentment in the minds of every loyal and liberty-loving Indian." He explained how the proposed legislation would affect the fundamental liberties of the people. He said : "Once a notification is made by the Governor-General-in-Council that the provisions of this law shall be in force in a particular area, arbitrary arrests, arbitrary imprisonments, summary trials *in camera* for offences, and other forms of legalized coercion may take place. Securities for good behaviour may be demanded of any person at the will of the Executive Government. This proceeding is not to be judicial in character or subject to appeal or revision.... The new legislation proposes to oust the jurisdiction of ordinary tribunals, including the High Court and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; it dispenses with ordinary rules of evidence, with trial by jury or assessors and with publicity to judicial proceedings. Its operation will bear resemblance to that of Martial Law."

Decrying the haste with which the legislation was being rushed through, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar asked why it could not wait until the new Council was formed under the Reforms scheme. "We read in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report",

he said, "what indeed is perfectly well known, that 'no argument is needed to show that under present conditions, 27 elected members, many of them returned by small class electorates, cannot adequately represent the interests of the entire country in the Supreme Assembly.'. . . . Why should they prefer, for the passing of such important and far-reaching measures, the Legislative Council in its present form which inadequately represents the entire country ?. . . Our duty is now to resist the passing into law of measures which are destructive of personal liberty and that sense of personal security which is the corner-stone of ordered progress and national self-development."

The meeting passed resolutions condemning the Rowlatt Bills and asking the non-official members of the Imperial Legislative Council to oppose the Bills.

At the all-India level other leaders were also working for the withdrawal of these obnoxious measures. Gandhiji, who since his arrival in India from South Africa had refrained from taking an active part in politics, appealed to the Viceroy not to proceed with the enactment of the much-criticized Bills. He addressed him private letters and public appeals in the course of which he clearly told the Viceroy that if the Government placed these measures on the statute-book he would be left with no choice but to resort to Satyagraha. These appeals, however, fell on deaf ears.

Gandhiji thereupon suggested the taking of a Passive Resistance (Satyagraha) Pledge by the public and the leaders of the country. The Pledge was to the following effect :

> Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bills known as the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, No. 1 of 1919, and the Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill, No. 2 of 1919, are unjust, subversive of the principle of liberty and justice and destructive of the community as a whole and the State itself,

> we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as a Committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit, and we further affirm that in this struggle we will faithfully follow the truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, as President of the Anti-Rowlatt Committee of Madras, invited Gandhiji to Madras for explaining his plan of action and for consultations with the local leaders. Gandhiji arrived in the city on March 17, 1919.

Gandhiji has described in detail his stay at Madras in his autobiography *My Experiments with Truth* :

> The (Rowlatt) Bill had not yet been gazetted as an Act. I was in a very weak condition, but when I received an invitation from Madras, I decided to take the risk of the long journey. . . .
>
> I have ever felt at home in the South. Thanks to my South African work, I felt I had some sort of special right over the Tamils and Telugus, and the good people of the South have never belied my belief. The invitation had come over the signature of the late Sjt Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. But the man behind the invitation, as I subsequently learnt on my way to Madras, was Rajagopalachari. This might be said to be my first acquaintance with him; at any rate this was the first time that we came to know each other personally.
>
> Rajagopalachari had then only recently left Salem to settle down for legal practice at Madras at the pressing invitation of friends like the late Sjt Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, and that with a view to taking a more active part in public life. It was with him that we had put up in Madras. This discovery I made only after we had stayed with him for a couple of days. For, since the bungalow that we were staying in belonged to Sjt Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, I was under the impression that we were his guests. Mahadev Desai, however, corrected me.

Mahatma Gandhi addressed a public meeting in Triplicane beach on March 18, which was presided over by

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar mentioned at the meeting that a good number of people in Madras had taken the Satyagraha Pledge suggested by Gandhiji. They had done so with a sense of responsibility of their duty to their Sovereign, to their country and to their families. He was sure that the spirit which animated them would permeate the country and accomplish its political redemption.

The Rowlatt Bill was passed into law during Gandhiji's stay at Madras. He issued a call to the country to observe April 6 as a day of protest against the Rowlatt Act. Supporting the call for *hartal*, *The Hindu* said on March 28 : "In spite of half-hearted supporters and open critics, we predict that the movement will not be the fiasco that our candid friends expect, for the simple reason that it is based on forces which have not hitherto entered into political life."

April 6, 1919, was observed as Satyagraha Day throughout the country most peacefully. Unprecedented scenes of fraternization between Hindus and Muslims, the higher castes and the lower castes, between the rich and the poor, marked the day. It was a heartening sign, a striking demonstration that India was one from the Cape to the Himalayas.

While Satyagraha Day passed off peacefully, a ghastly tragedy was developing in the Punjab.

The Governor of the Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, reputed to be an Iron Man, was determined to prevent the contamination of his province by ideas of nationalism. The Congress of 1919 had been invited to Amritsar, and the influx of a new surge of national ideas seemed imminent. O'Dwyer was determined to prevent this. The two leading Congressmen who were organizing the Congress session, Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr Satyapal, were sent for by the District Magistrate of Amritsar on April 10. When

they presented themselves, they were arrested and spirited away to an unknown destination. News of this spread like wild fire in the place, and soon a big crowd gathered and wanted to meet the District Magistrate to ask him about the whereabouts of their leaders. The crowd was prevented from meeting the Magistrate. It grew restive and resorted to stone-throwing and rioting. The police opened fire, resulting in one or two deaths and several casualties. The police firing only served to infuriate the crowd further. The angry mob set fire to an English bank and killed its European manager. The day's rioting was responsible for the deaths of five Englishmen and the destruction by fire of a bank, a railway goods-shed and some other public buildings. The Government grew panicky and called in the military to take charge of the situation in the town. Similar rioting occurred at Gujranwala and Kasur.

On hearing about the riots in the Punjab, Gandhiji hastened to Delhi to go to the Punjab. However, on the way he was served with an order not to enter Delhi or the Punjab. He refused to obey the order, was arrested and taken by a special train to Bombay.

Meanwhile, things were moving to a crisis in Amritsar. On April 13, 1919, which was the Hindu New Year Day, a large public meeting took place in an enclosure called Jallianwala Bagh. The place is an open ground surrounded on all sides by buildings and having entry through narrow passages. In this place, about 20,000 people had gathered and were listening to speeches by their leaders. At this moment, General Dyer, the Military Commander in Amritsar, entered the place with a hundred Indian and fifty British troops. The bare formality of a warning was given to the crowd to disperse. Within two minutes of the warning, the troops were ordered to shoot, and shoot they did

until their ammunition ran out. They fired in all 1,600 rounds.

The suddenness of the order to shoot, the pandemonium due to the stampede, the panic on learning that the troops were blocking the main entrance, and the mad rush of thousands of men, women and children to get out—all these contributed to a heavy toll of human life. The official account itself placed the dead at 400 and the number of the wounded between a thousand and two thousand.

General Dyer's justification for the firing was that the city was under military control and that he had warned by beat of tomtom in the morning that no public meeting would be permitted. He wanted "to teach the people a lesson" and to show them that he meant business. He declared that he was not sorry about the firing and would have ordered further firing but for the fact that ammunition had run out.

The victims of the firing were not attended to the whole of that night. Many died of their wounds.

General Dyer let loose a reign of terror in the city. The water supply and electricity were cut off. People were summarily tried, punished under Martial Law with flogging in public and other savage sentences such as transportation for life and long terms of imprisonment. In a certain lane where an English lady doctor had been attacked by hooligans but protected by some good people, a ruthless order was issued that all persons living in the lane and all those passing through it should crawl on all fours in the lane.

A tight censorship on all news was also imposed and for quite some time details of the atrocities at Amritsar, Gujranwala, Kasur and other places were not known to the outside world. But the news permitted by the Government was itself serious enough to draw attention and comment.

Mahatma Gandhi considered the situation in the Punjab so serious that he called off his plan for Satyagraha.

The All-India Congress Committee met on April 20 at Bombay under the presidentship of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. The Committee discussed the situation in the Punjab and appointed a sub-committee consisting of Pandit Malaviya, V. J. Patel, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, M. R. Jayakar and Motilal Nehru to draft a representation to the Secretary of State and the Viceroy for immediate transmission. The sub-committee quickly completed its work and Pandit Malaviya sent on behalf of the All-India Congress Committee cables to the British Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for India and Lord Sinha, Under-Secretary, asking for the suspension of the execution of all sentences passed under Martial Law pending an enquiry proposed by the Congress.

To secure a proper assessment of the magnitude of the suffering inflicted on the Punjab, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar joined five other leading Editors of the country in a move to get first-hand information. The following telegram was sent on behalf of the six Editors to the Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government, with copies to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy and to the Home Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council :

> We, the undersigned, propose to depute Mr C. F. Andrews to visit the Punjab with a view to report to the Indian Press on condition of affairs in Province with special reference to administration of Martial Law in view of fact that no non-official account of existing state of affairs is available. We trust that Punjab Government will accord permission to our Representative to visit Province and otherwise give him all necessary facilities to carry enquiry. Mr Andrews will leave for Lahore as soon as your Government grant him permission. Kindly communicate decision by wire to *Independent*, Allahabad. Signed, Surendranath Banerjea, Editor, *Bengalee;* A. Besant,

Editor, *New India;* Motilal Ghosh, Editor, *A. B. Patrika;* S. K. R. Iyengar, Editor, *The Hindu;* C. Y. Chintamani, Editor, *Leader;* Syed Hossain, Editor, *Independent.*

The Editors' efforts did not bear fruit. The Rev. Mr Andrews was not only not permitted to enter the Punjab, but a prohibitory order was issued preventing his entry into the Province. Andrews defied this and was arrested and deported.

The attitude of the Government to the Punjab tragedy led to several Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council resigning from the Council in protest. Pandit Malaviya, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and Mazharul Haque were among those who resigned. Others, like Sir Rabindranath Tagore and Sir J. C. Bose, relinquished their titles in protest.

These protests galvanized the nation. At Madras, a public meeting took note of these laudable actions and expressed its appreciation. At this meeting, an unregistered paper called *Satyagrahi,* published by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar in English, Tamil and Telugu, was released, and autographed copies were auctioned.

When many nationalist members of the Imperial Legislative Council resigned from it, the question that naturally arose in many minds was whether Sir Sankaran Nair, the Indian Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, would also resign. This was a subject of hot discussion everywhere. Although Sankaran Nair was a lifelong friend of his, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar did not hesitate to question his attitude on this critical occasion. "The views and actions of our eminent countryman, Sir Sankaran Nair", *The Hindu* wrote on April 28, "who holds the high and onerous office of the Indian Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, are more or less a mystery to the public. The interests and rights which are being jeopardized by the recent actions of

the Government of India are too vital and vast for any self-respecting Indian to submit without a word of protest."

Sankaran Nair's attitude did not remain a mystery much longer. He resigned his office in the last week of May, and *The Hindu* whole-heartedly welcomed it as "the inevitable sequel of the present order of things".

Chapter 20

A VICTIM OF THE PRESS ACT

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar felt that there ought to be a thorough public enquiry into the tragic events in the Punjab so that the guilty might be exposed. On May 5, 1919, he wrote an editorial pleading for a proper enquiry, and on the same day he presided over a meeting at the Mahajana Sabha Hall which was addressed by Govardhan Doss from Lahore, who had come to Madras to apprise the public of the seriousness of the situation in his province. Doss spoke at length about the atrocities committed in the name of Martial Law at Amritsar and elsewhere.

The Hindu carried a full report of Govardhan Doss's speech. Three days later, on May 8, the paper came out with a spirited editorial drawing attention to the terrible ordeal of the people of the Punjab : "As the steady trickle of carefully filtered news from the Punjab accumulates, one gathers that things are being done in the name of law and order which, unless their necessity is established to far more convincing extent than at present, are bound to have very grave consequences for the future peace and contentment of this country. Public opinion, always ready to support strong measures in the restoration of order, is beginning to view with resentment and dismay the manner in which Martial Law is applied. Tyrannical methods are not sanctified because they are applied by a British Colonel and sanctioned by an Irish Satrap. One wonders in these days if there is a Central Government at all and if it has any policy at the back of its mind apart from an invertebrate surrender to the provincial (hot-) heads of administration...

It is therefore up to the Government of India to grasp the reins firmly and seriously and consider how far the internal conditions of the country require its constant exasperation by methods such as have been taking place. If it is the duty of the people to co-operate in the restoration of order, it is no less the duty of the State to make such co-operation possible. There is a point of persistence beyond which justice degenerates into vindictiveness and any further tales of the exploits of the 'no d——d nonsense' school will only serve to convince the public that that point has been reached and passed."

The Madras Government, which had been for some time past feeling annoyed with *The Hindu* and its Editor, found in this editorial and in the report of the meeting addressed by Govardhan Doss of Lahore sufficient justification for demanding security from the paper. The Chief Presidency Magistrate, Madras, taking action under the Press Act, demanded the deposit of a security of Rs. 2,000 from *The Hindu*.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was not the man to be cowed down. In an editorial written on receipt of the order, he declared : "We have been struck with amazement that the Madras Government should have taken offence at the publication of these articles... The protest which the members of the English Bar Association of Bengal with the Advocate-General at their head have found it necessary to make, as well as the reported resignation of his high office by Sir Sankaran Nair on account of his strong disapproval of the Martial Law measures in the Punjab, are among the decisive indications of the current of well-informed opinion on the subject. The Madras Government perched on the blue hills of Ooty are not in a better position to form an opinion on the Punjab affairs and have no higher interests to

subserve than journalists who are imbued with a true love of their own country toiling on the plains and deriving information from various sources. . . . We feel that the action of the Madras Government in putting the Press Act into operation against *The Hindu* on account of the articles on Punjab affairs that were published on the 8th instant, is a violent stretch of the arbitrary power conferred by that Act. It is a gross and dangerous infringement of the liberty of the press and if the present policy is continued, it must lead to an extinguishment of honest and independent journalism in the country. So far as *The Hindu* is concerned, the contemplation of a perverted application of the Press Act, and the involving of it into further pains and penalties, will not have the result of inducing it to swerve from its past traditions and the path of journalistic independence and rectitude which it has always maintained."

The action against *The Hindu* surprised many Indian leaders and the press generally. Mahatma Gandhi's *Young India* wrote : "We are surprised that Lord Willingdon's Government has thought fit to serve on *The Hindu* a notice to show cause why security should not be lodged for the reasons stated in that order. *The Hindu* is one of the oldest and most respected newspapers in India. It has always been conducted with due restraint. It has a reputation to keep. And, in calling upon *The Hindu* to show cause, the Madras Government has needlessly wounded public feeling. For, this affront to *The Hindu* is in reality an affront to the public. We hope that better counsels will prevail and that the proposed security will be waived."

Mrs Besant's *New India* said that the proceedings left one utterly unconvinced as to the necessity of the action. There was nothing objectionable in the articles objected to.

Dr S. Subramania Iyer made an interesting suggestion.

He said that *The Hindu* might republish the offending articles so that if the security was forfeited, *The Hindu* could contest the action in the High Court. He made this suggestion since no appeal was possible against a demand for security, while an appeal could be made when a security was forfeited.

Following the action against *The Hindu,* security was similarly demanded from two other papers in the city. The Tamil daily, *Swadesamitran,* was asked to deposit Rs. 2,000 for having printed two pamphlets which were deemed objectionable. *Hindu Nesan,* another Tamil paper, was asked to deposit Rs. 1,000 for an alleged objectionable article.

As besides the papers mentioned above, two others, *New India* and *Desabhaktan,* had also been earlier dealt with under the Press Act, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar felt that an orgy of repression against the press had been let loose. The defence of press freedom, he thought, was a more urgent problem than even action in regard to the proposed Reforms scheme. In an editorial on May 28, 1919, *The Hindu* said : "The action taken by the Government under the Press Act against *The Hindu*, the *Swadesamitran* Press, the *Desabhaktan* and the *Hindu Nesan* and other papers in this Presidency and elsewhere ought to set earnest minds in the country thinking as to what should be done without any loss of time to preserve one of the most valuable rights of the people."

Another editorial, titled "The Era of Repression", observed that "if *The Hindu* has suffered at all—it has not done so, we are glad to say, in the estimation of the public—it has suffered in a cause for the upholding of which Sir Rabindranath Tagore has laid down his knighthood and

Sir Sankaran Nair his office as Member of the Viceroy's Council."

At a representative meeting held on June 5 to protest against the Press Act, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar said : "The situation in the Punjab and the sufferings of our fellow-countrymen there have shocked the entire Indian public. No honest journalist can remain silent, passive or indifferent when acts are reported showing that executive authority seeks to trample justice, law and humanity. I should be unworthy of conducting a Nationalist organ of any pretensions to independence and public spirit if I had failed to comment upon the Punjab situation. The insistent popular demand for an open enquiry into the Punjab situation was made throughout the country through the Indian journals and the Secretary of State appears to have acquiesced in the justice of it in his Budget speech. The action of Lord Willingdon's Government in taking security under the Press Act against *The Hindu* is, under the circumstances, a deep mystery to me. Whatever may be the nature of the Reforms which we may get, there is nothing so valuable for constitutional development as a Free Press. The Press Act is a standing hindrance, in fact a noxious engine of oppression and of extinguishment of an independent Press. The duty of our public men is to obtain its repeal by a strong and well-organized agitation in England."

The idea of conducting sustained propaganda in England for the Indian cause had been one of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's cherished ideas. Ever since his return from Britain, he had been giving thought to this. In January 1919, he wrote to his friend C. Vijiaraghavachariar that "the most important things to do now are in respect of the agitation regarding the Bills on the Rowlatt Committee Report, and collecting funds for the Congress Deputation." In March

1919, he had actually formed an organization called "The National Work Fund", with the main purpose of supporting "the propaganda work in Great Britain which is being carried on by Mr B. G. Tilak and his friends", and a subsidiary purpose of helping national work in India.

In the middle of 1919, the Delegation to England sent by the Indian National Congress to present its case before the British public and also before the Joint Parliamentary Committee, which was taking evidence on the proposed Reforms, did yeoman service. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who had been helping the Delegation with suggestions and financial support, urged the members of the Delegation to devote special attention to press freedom. In a letter to S. Satyamurti, a member of the Delegation, he wrote :

Coonoor,
24th June, 1919

My dear Satyamurti,

I am glad Mr V. P. Madhava Rao, yourself and others have reached England safe and comfortably. I have received two of your letters written from Port Said and London, but not the first one which you refer to in them. The Reform Bill was published here last week and we consider it very unsatisfactory and disappointing. A meeting of the All-India Congress Committee is to be convened urgently to consider the matter. I do not know whether they will consider it necessary to hold a special Congress now. The Madras Provincial Conference is to be held on 1st July when Madras opinion will pronounce itself and it will be cabled to England. I note your opinion that it is not likely that Mr Montagu's scheme will be much modified to our advantage. We have, however, to press forward our view with the utmost vigour. The present scheme is a mere make-believe reform.

Since you left, the Press Act has been put in vigorous operation in an unreasonable and relentless manner. Before this letter reaches you, you would have received copies of *The Hindu* which show that *The Hindu* has been required to furnish

security for an article on the Punjab situation. The *Swadesamitran* and the *Hindu Nesan* have been similarly dealt with. All over the country this repression is going on. The editors of the *Tribune* and the *Home Ruler* have been convicted of sedition and sentenced to two years R.I. The position of independent journalists is well nigh becoming intolerable. The opinion here is that more than the Reforms scheme, a vigorous agitation is necessary at once in England in order that personal liberty and freedom of speech and writing may be placed on a reasonable security. We are sending a long cable on behalf of the Indian Press Association indicating the present state of things. Immediately after opinion on the Reform Bill is focused here by means of the Special Congress, if resolved upon, and the Provincial Conference, we think of sending a special Press Deputation, in which A. Rangaswami and myself may be members, to proceed to England. In the meantime, I hope the Deputation now in England will do their utmost to get a repeal of the Press Act. *The Hindu* is being sent to you care of Mr Tilak....

Your cables and letters are of course read with much interest and the more of them in these exciting and interesting times, the better. Give my regards to Mr V. P. Madhava Rao, Mr Tilak and others. Remember me also to Mr Polak, Mr Frederick Grubb and Mr Nihal Singh.

Yours sincerely,
S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar

A letter written by A. Rangaswami Iyengar to S. Satyamurti about this time reveals that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and A. Rangaswami Iyengar strongly felt that they should go to England and "agitate this one matter (repeal of the Press Act) above all others and see something is done for our civil liberties before political 'reforms' are enacted." Eventually, however, only A. Rangaswami Iyengar went to England on the Home Rule Deputation.

While Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was making efforts to move the higher authorities in England on the Press Act, he had a call from the Governor of Madras, Lord Willingdon, to

meet him. On June 25, 1919, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar met the Governor at Ooty. "I saw the Governor by his invitation," he wrote to his friend C. Vijiaraghavachariar, "and had a long and frank conversation with him on the security matter. I wish you would come up here for a day at least when Sankaran Nair arrives on the 13th. I could give you all the details in person." What passed at the closed door meeting with the Governor we do not know, but the Government's attitude towards *The Hindu* remained unchanged.

While British officialdom in India was unrepentant and unyielding, the British press showed a better appreciation of the situation as time went by. Since censorship had been imposed on news in the Punjab, it took several months before the truth reached the British press. But once the facts became known, the leading British papers began to doubt the wisdom of the policies pursued by the Punjab and Indian Governments. In December 1919, the London *Times* came out with a scathing attack on the Punjab affairs which was completely at variance with the paper's earlier attitude supporting Government action. "The whirligig of time brings its revenge", wrote *The Hindu* on December 20, 1919, "but few would have dreamt of a revenge so complete as that implied in the conversion of *The Times* from an ardent devotee of O'Dwyerism to the attitude it now adopts with regard to the Punjab massacre. *The Times* certainly does nothing by halves and its plain-speaking takes one's breath away. It is at any rate certain that any Indian paper which ventures to use language as strong would immediately find itself in the gentle embraces of the Press Act."

The All-India Congress Committee met at Allahabad on June 8 to discuss the Punjab situation. It reiterated an

earlier demand for an official enquiry into the Punjab affairs, and also appointed a Special Committee on the Punjab to conduct its own unofficial enquiries, with special reference to Governor O'Dwyer's regime and the administration of Martial Law. The Committee was empowered to collect evidence in the Punjab and elsewhere, to take legal action in India or England, as may be needed, and to collect funds for the relief of the people of the Punjab. Pandit Malaviya was appointed Chairman and the Committee members included Pandit Motilal Nehru, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Desabandhu Das. Mahatma Gandhi, C. F. Andrews and Swami Shraddhanand were co-opted as members later. The Committee started its work right away.

Meanwhile, the Government appointed an official enquiry Commission under Lord Hunter. The Commission's terms of reference fell much short of the Congress demand, but the Congress Committee agreed to lead evidence before the Hunter Commission. However, when the Congress Committee wanted to bring some leaders who were under Martial Law detention before the Commission to give evidence, the Commission refused permission. Thereupon, the Congress Committee withdrew from the official enquiry and conducted its own enquiry independently.

It was at this time that the Reforms Bill embodying the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals with some modifications, came up for consideration before the British Parliament. "Accept the Reforms and agitate for more", was the policy advised by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, as a true disciple of Tilak. He repeated his advice at the Nationalists' Conference at Madras on November 23.

In December 1919, Lokamanya Tilak, who had been in England to conduct his libel action against Sir Valentine

Chirol, returned to India on the case's being decided against him. Soon after his return, he had an invitation from Kasturi Ranga Iyengar to visit Madras. Tilak arrived at Madras on December 17. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, C. Vijiaraghavachariar, C. Rajagopalachari, V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, Subbaraya Kamath and others received him at the Central Station. Parties of Boy Scouts and Labour Union groups were present at the station to provide a guard of honour. A band and a *nadaswaram* party had also been arranged. Tilak was taken in procession to the residence arranged for him in Royapettah High Road.

At a public meeting in Triplicane beach that evening, over which Kasturi Ranga Iyengar presided, addresses were presented to the Lokamanya on behalf of the Madras and Andhra Provincial Congress Committees, the All-India Home Rule League and other bodies. A number of labour unions, with which Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was connected, also extended their welcome.

Tilak explained the work done in England by him and the members of the Congress Delegation sent from India. He pointed out that there were at this time a number of delegations from India in London to present their cases before the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Parliament. The Congress Delegation had pressed for the acceptance of the Congress-League Scheme.

Tilak went on to explain his attitude to the Reforms. "We shall never be satisfied", he said, "until we get full Home Rule. It does not mean we boycott what is given. When we build the foundation, any stone will be incorporated into it. We do not reject anything. It is for Parliament to accept the Congress scheme or not. If it rejects it, we shall continue our work."

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who held similar opinions, said that they had had a masterly analysis of the work done by the Congress Delegation in England from the Lokamanya. He expressed grateful acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by Tilak not only during the past forty years but also during his recent sojourn in England on private work.

One of the highlights of Tilak's visit to Madras was a cosmopolitan dinner arranged by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar at which many local leaders were present.

By the end of December, when the Indian National Congress met at Amritsar, the Reforms Bill had been passed by the British Parliament. The main issues before the Congress were, therefore, its attitude to the Reforms and its policy regarding the Punjab situation. At Amritsar, new forces came into play in the Congress and it was a trial of strength between several groups, each holding a slightly different view on the Reforms. Leaders like Tilak and Gandhiji were for working the Reforms and pressing for more; while others led by C. R. Das were for rejecting the Reforms. Tilak and his followers believed in "Responsive Co-operation" in regard to the Reforms. Tilak had actually, on his way to the Congress, sent a telegram to His Majesty the King expressing this view.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar attended the Amritsar Congress and took an active part in its deliberations. Thanks to effective lobbying and the support of Gandhiji, the Congress ultimately passed a resolution which accommodated the views of the Tilak and Das groups. The resolution said the Reform Act was "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing," but added that "pending the introduction of Responsible Government, the people would so work the Reforms as to secure its early establishment."

The Amritsar Congress passed another important resolution. Proposed by Syed Hossain and seconded by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, the resolution said : "In view of the fact that Lord Chelmsford has completely forfeited the confidence of the people of this country, this Congress hereby beseeches His Imperial Majesty to be graciously pleased immediately to recall His Excellency."

This was a signal victory for Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, for he was one of those who had been carrying on a campaign against Lord Chelmsford, criticizing him for his supine subservience to the O'Dwyer regime in the Punjab. On the eve of the Congress session *The Hindu* had written a series of editorials each ending with the refrain : "Will Lord Chelmsford go ?"

The Amritsar Congress accepted another suggestion of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. It was on the question of establishing a permanent Congress mission in England, replacing the British Committee of the Congress about whose working both Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Tilak had expressed dissatisfaction. The Congress passed the following resolution on the subject : "The Congress is emphatically of opinion that the time has arrived for establishing a permanent mission of its own for propagandist work in England and elsewhere, and appoints a Committee of the following gentlemen to collect necessary funds for the purpose and to select personnel of the mission for the first year : Messrs B. G. Tilak (Convener), S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, T. Prakasam, B. Chakravarthi, Mohamed Ali, S. K. Bomanji, Lala Lajpat Rai, G. S. Khaparde, Syed Hassan Imam, Hon'ble Mr K. V. Rangaswami Iyengar, Manubhoj Dutta Chowdhry, with powers to add if necessary."

CHAPTER 21

TOWARDS NON-CO-OPERATION

The year 1920 was a year of ceaseless activity in the national cause for Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. Although his health was none too good at the time, he presided over conferences, participated in Congress meetings and engaged himself in organizational work. All this was, of course, in addition to his exacting editorial work.

The year opened with a personal event of some importance to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. On January 9, 1920, he completed sixty years according to the Hindu calendar. This was an occasion for religious ceremonies and for felicitations from friends. Several admirers of his arranged a public meeting to celebrate the occasion. It was a representative gathering, attended by Hindus, Muslims and Christians, Brahmins and non-Brahmins, caste Hindus and Adi-Dravidas. Everyone had praise for Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's services to the country, especially through *The Hindu*. On behalf of the Indian Christian community, a speaker thanked Kasturi Ranga Iyengar for his support to the efforts to kindle national feelings amongst them. A Muslim speaker appealed to him to take up the cause of the Muslims and give them a lead. A Tamil scholar and Editor, T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, said that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar "was a Hindu, but not a hater of other religions; a Brahmin, but not a hater of other castes." The address of felicitations read on the occasion told him that "it has been the service which *The Hindu* has rendered to the general and political progress of South India under

your inspiration and initiative that has endeared your name to the people."

Acknowledging the felicitations, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar recalled that it would be fifteen years to a day at the end of March since he took charge of *The Hindu*. "The last fifteen years," he said, "have been in many ways a momentous and eventful period in the history of the country. Southern India has thrown off the lethargy usually attributed to it and in its social and political activity, it stands unsurpassed by any portion or Province of India. *The Hindu* has been a bark sailing in troubled waters, and it may be fairly claimed for it, without undue self-ostentation, that it has breasted with steadiness and success the waves of reaction and repression which are the invariable concomitants of a bureaucratic Government. Purity of character, freedom from corruption and earnestness of purpose are by no means sure passports to the goodwill or even tolerance of the powers that be in the existing system of Government. We are constantly reminded by the happenings in the country of the observation of Charles James Fox that 'civil liberty can have no security without political power'."

The Government were proceeding with their programme for the introduction of the Montford Reforms. As a gesture for the occasion, a general amnesty was declared and security deposits received from all papers were returned. *The Hindu* got back the security it had furnished in 1919.

The political situation in the country was moving, however, towards a fresh crisis. Hot on the heels of the Punjab tragedy came what Gandhiji described as the Khilafat wrong. Muslim opinion in India was greatly embittered by the Allied decision after the war to strip Turkey of her control of Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria and Palestine, and to hand over a part of Turkey in Asia Minor

to Greece. Congress and Muslim leaders met and decided at Amritsar to organize the Khilafat agitation under the guidance of Gandhiji.

As a first step in organizing Muslim opinion, Khilafat conferences were held all over the country and Congressmen actively participated in them. In Madras, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was Vice-President of the Madras Presidency Khilafat Committee and took part in the Madras Presidency Khilafat Conference held in the City on April 21. The Conference was held under the presidentship of Maulana Shaukat Ali. Over six thousand delegates and visitors from the entire province gathered at the Conference. A number of prominent Hindu leaders were present to mark their sympathy with the Khilafat cause.

The main resolution of the Conference called upon all Indians "to resort to progressive abstention from co-operation with Government in the following manner: first, to renounce all honorary posts, titles, and membership of Legislative Councils; secondly, to give up all remunerative posts under Government service; thirdly, to give up all appointments in the Police and Military forces; and, fourthly, to refuse to pay taxes to Government."

Seconding the resolution, which was moved by a Muslim leader, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar said that the resolution marked the stage at which words gave place to deeds. They all hoped that that stage would not be reached, and that the present agitation would not prove futile and ineffective.

S. Satyamurti, C. Rajagopalachari and A. Rangaswami Iyengar were among other Congress leaders who spoke in support of the resolution. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Encouraged by the response from provincial Khilafat organizations, the All-India Khilafat Committee, meeting at

Bombay on May 28, adopted Mahatma Gandhi's proposals for non-co-operation as the only means left to Indian Muslims.

The All-India Congress Committee, meeting two days later, decided to hold a Special session of the Congress to consider the question of non-co-operation. Meanwhile, a joint Hindu-Muslim Conference at Allahabad met during the last week of June and decided to resort to non-co-operation from August 1, 1920.

On August 1, the day fixed for the start of the non-co-operation movement, Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak passed away. It was a stunning national loss. To Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who had known Tilak intimately over many years as a comrade-in-arms in the national struggle, the loss was personal. He wrote in *The Hindu*: "Mr Tilak is dead. The sorrowful news must cause consternation and cast a gloom all over the country. In all Indian hearts which contain a spark of patriotism and a glimmering of the truth in regard to the fallen fortunes of India, the death of its most valiant champion in whom was symbolized all that was best and greatest of India's past culture and greatness and the rich fulfilment of its glorious future, must cause a heart-wrench of no common kind. A mourning country will find some consolation in the fact that if there is any truth in the existence of a kindly destiny, it will not suffer that a life like that of Mr Tilak should have been lived in vain." Speaking at a condolence meeting held at Triplicane, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar described Tilak as "my beloved friend and illustrious leader" and recalled his services and sacrifices in the cause of the country.

The passing away of the great Lokamanya was no doubt a great loss to the Indian people, but already the

mantle of political leadership had fallen on the shoulders of another great figure, Mahatma Gandhi.

It was while Gandhiji was touring the country to propagate his non-co-operation programme that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar resigned his membership of the provincial Prince of Wales's Entertainment Committee, an official body with the Governor, Lord Willingdon, as its President. In his letter to His Excellency, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar explained his reasons :

> Your Excellency,
>
> I beg to resign my membership of the Prince of Wales's Entertainment Committee (of the General Committee as well as of the Executive Committee) as I feel that I should not continue to be a member of the same and take part in the arrangements relating to the reception of His Royal Highness, after the manner in which the House of Lords has adopted Lord Finlay's motion in the matter of the Punjab massacres, and after the expression of similar opinions on the subject by the vast majority of Englishmen and Englishwomen residing in this country.
>
> I entirely disagree with Mr Montagu in his view that Mr Gandhi's proposal not to take part in the reception of the Prince of Wales is a disloyal one, and I feel that the strictures made on Gandhi by Mr Montagu and Lord Sinha in the House of Commons and the House of Lords respectively are wholly unwarranted and unmerited, and ought not to have been made.
>
> I beg to remain,
> Your Excellency's obedient servant,
> S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar

In the second week of August 1920, Gandhiji visited Madras and addressed a public meeting explaining his plan for non-co-operation to the public and the leaders of Madras.

Three days later, the Madras Provincial Congress Committee met to consider the non-co-operation question. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, as President of the Committee, was looked up to for guidance and advice by the members. He

spoke at length, detailing where he agreed and where he disagreed with Mahatma Gandhi. "I agree with Gandhiji in the principle behind non-co-operation", he said, "but disagree with him in details. In the first place, it seems to me that in laying out a programme for adoption, in saying that it should be immediately adopted and that it is not necessary for the people to wait for the decision of the Congress, Mahatma Gandhi has laid down a doctrine which we at least who belong to the Congress Committee cannot follow."

Regarding the details of the Gandhian programme he said : "My own view is that absolute boycott of Legislative Councils should not be adopted by the country, because the Congress at its last session at Amritsar did ask the country to work the Reforms Act in order to secure early establishment of full responsible Government. . . . Until the Congress, which is going to meet shortly, makes any modification of that appeal to the country, it does not lie with us to say we shall not take part in the elections. . . . There is a form of non-co-operation which we can practise even after the elections. . . . It will be enough for me to say that it is possible to bring such moral pressure upon the Government that we can get all that we want by having a majority of Nationalists in the Legislative Council." Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had one other point of difference with Gandhiji. He explained it thus : "Mr Gandhi's programme of non-co-operation is based upon the fact that it will be enough if a few individuals who believe in its efficacy follow it. My standpoint is entirely different, *viz.*, that even a moderate form of non-co-operation, if it is diffused over the whole country on a large scale, would bring such a moral pressure on the Government as to redress our grievances. . . I consider the movement should be a national one, must be spread on as large a scale as possible and must permeate

to all classes of people. That will, no doubt, take time and the steps should be introduced one after another. There must be room given for one stage of non-co-operation to have full operation before we go to the next. . . . Sufficient time should be given for each stage of non-co-operation in order to see the effect of it on the Government. If one step proves futile, then of course we can go on to the next stage."

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar further explained that he disagreed with Gandhiji about asking lawyers to give up practice and asking students to come out of schools and colleges. Asking lawyers to stop practice was, in his view, "both impractical and undesirable" since lawyers were not helping the Government but helping the people to secure justice. Asking students to come out of schools was "not a practical proposition", and he did not think "that the end which Mr Gandhi had in view would be achieved by this."

One important activity Kasturi Ranga Iyengar wanted to be added to Gandhiji's programme. He urged the importance of the boycott of foreign goods as part of the non-co-operation programme. "It is not necessary", he said, "that we should practise the principle of non-co-operation only with the persons who are employed in the service of the Government. It appears to me it is more important that in the interests of the country we should employ all means to see that indigenous industries are promoted and that foreign goods and foreign capital and enterprise are kept out."

After hearing Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and a number of other speakers, the Madras Provincial Congress Committee approved a policy of non-co-operation but voted against Gandhiji's programme.

Within less than a month of this vote, the Special

Congress session convened to decide on the non-co-operation programme met at Calcutta early in September, 1920, under the presidentship of Lala Lajpat Rai. The question of participation or otherwise in the elections under the new Reforms provoked a sharp difference of opinion between Gandhiji and the Nationalists. There was a heated debate in the Subjects Committee on the non-co-operation resolution to be placed before the open session. C. R. Das moved the main resolution which opposed any boycott of the elections and which favoured Council-entry. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar supported this view. Mahatma Gandhi, through an amendment, sought to include boycott of Councils as one of the active proposals of his non-co-operation programme. He argued that if the country followed his programme, it would get Swaraj within a year.

The Calcutta Congress accepted Gandhiji's amendment and the non-co-operation resolution was finally passed in the manner desired by him. The programme of non-co-operation included surrender of titles and honorary offices, refusal to attend Government *durbars* and levees, withdrawal of children from schools and colleges controlled or aided by the Government, the establishment of national schools and colleges, gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants and the establishment of private arbitration courts for the settlement of private disputes, refusal to volunteer for military service, boycott of elections both by non-voting and by not standing for elections, and boycott of foreign goods. In order to meet the country's needs in cloth, the revival of hand-spinning in every house and the encouragement of hand-weaving on a vast scale were recommended.

The question of members of the Congress standing for elections again figured at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held immediately after the Special

Congress to consider the action to be taken on the non-co-operation resolution. Pandit Malaviya presided and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was among those present.

At the end of the meeting Pandit Malaviya said that as one who had not voted for that part of the resolution which advised boycott of elections, he was determined to pursue a course of action different from that adopted by the Congress. Although he had the greatest regard for Gandhiji, it was his most painful duty to differ from him entirely in regard to the resolution on non-co-operation. He was determined to remain in the Congress and still seek election to the Legislative Council.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar who, like Malaviyaji, had voted against the boycott of elections, said that he felt relieved to hear the statement from Malaviyaji, because a number of friends who were standing as candidates and who were also Congressmen had doubts as to whether they should continue to be members of the Congress while seeking election to Councils. He added that Malaviyaji's example would serve as a precedent to them and might be acted upon by others who were in a similar position with regard to the resolution. He then said that they would like to hear Gandhiji's views on the matter.

Gandhiji said that the minority which felt that it should contest the elections was free to act according to its conscience and continue to be members of the Congress or not while seeking election to Councils.

Gandhiji's reply placed the burden entirely on the individual member to act according to his conscience. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar felt it his duty to resign from executive positions in the Congress as he held the view that Congressmen should seek election to Councils to prevent unpatriotic elements getting in and also to use the Council Chamber as an arena for non-co-operation. Accordingly,

soon after returning to Madras from the Congress session, he sent in his resignation of his position as President of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee. Two Secretaries and two members of the Executive Committee of the M.P.C.C. also resigned with him. The resignations were, however, not accepted by the Committee which asked them to reconsider their decision and withdraw their resignations.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's position *vis-a-vis* the non-co-operation resolution of the Congress was explained in an editorial in *The Hindu* at the time : "We must in the first place point out that while we do not consider the resolution of the Congress mandatory, inasmuch as it only recommends a certain course, still there is a certain moral authority behind it unless public life is a farce and the cohesiveness of the Congress is to be destroyed. Nationalists who stand for the Council cannot, in our opinion, expect support from any Congress organization. These last, in our opinion, exist for the purpose of carrying out the policy of the Congress and there is no place in them for any one who is not prepared to accept that policy.. Of the three steps enumerated for non-co-operation, we condemn one (withdrawal of children from schools) as positively suicidal, the other (lawyers giving up practice) as impractical, and the third (boycott of elections and Councils) as inadvisable. And yet, the Congress has recommended them and it will be for each man to decide how far he can pursue the course recommended within the limits, on the one hand, of his conscience and his solicitude for the best interests of the country, and on the other of his loyalty to the Congress. Successful politics consists in judicious though not slavish subordination of the individual to the general will. Majorities are not always in the right; but it is politically convenient, except when individual convictions admit of no compromise to assume that they generally are."

In view of the M.P.C.C.'s request, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar did not press for the acceptance of his resignation. There was another potent reason for his decision. His close friend, C. Vijiaraghavachariar, had set an example for other Congressmen by loyally adhering to the resolution of the Special Congress. Vijiaraghavachariar held the same views as Kasturi Ranga Iyengar on Council-entry. He firmly and actively opposed Mahatma Gandhi's plan for the boycott of Council elections. However, when the Special Congress accepted Gandhiji's programme of action Vijiaraghavachariar felt it his duty to abide by the decision of the Congress if only to prevent further splitting up of the great national institution. He accordingly withdrew his candidature for election to the Madras Legislative Council. Nor would he seek election to a seat in the Indian Legislative Assembly. This demonstration of disciplined loyalty appealed to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar.

Others too who had genuine doubts about Mahatma Gandhi's programme were dissuading Kasturi Ranga Iyengar from resigning his position in the Provincial Congress Committee. From distant Calcutta, Motilal Ghosh, veteran editor of *The Amrita Bazar Patrika,* in a letter to S. Satyamurti, wrote :

Calcutta,
15th October, 1920

Dear Satyamurti,

You must have received my yesterday's telegram addressed to *The Hindu* in which I requested you and Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar not to resign your posts in the Provincial Congress Committee...

I am anxious that the policy of *The Patrika* and *The Hindu* should be the same in regard to the Congress. Gandhi's programme is too lofty for the bulk of our people....

This letter is meant both to you and my friend Mr Kasturi Ranga. And I hope he will not adopt any definite policy in regard to the Congress and Mr Gandhi's programme without any previous consultation with me..

Yours sincerely,
Motilal Ghosh

Despite the doubts and fears expressed by many senior leaders, the next session of the Congress—the regular session which met at Nagpur—proved how right Gandhiji was and how wrong the others were. The Nagpur Congress met under the presidentship of C. Vijiaraghavachariar, who was himself one of those who had doubts about the wisdom of Gandhiji's plans for non-co-operation. But at this session of the Congress, which was attended by more than 14,500 delegates from all over the country, a new orientation was given to Congress policy and absolute unity achieved.

Since the non-co-operation resolution had been passed only at a Special session of the Congress, there were many who felt that the regular session of the Congress at Nagpur might not necessarily confirm it. But Mahatma Gandhi won the day. He offered at Nagpur a compromise draft which was acceptable to all the leaders who had doubts about the resolution passed earlier. Whereas in the Calcutta Special Congress only Pandit Motilal Nehru extended support to him, in Nagpur, Gandhiji had the support of everyone, including C. R. Das, Lajpat Rai, Vijiaraghavachariar and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. It was a crowning success for Gandhiji's persuasive approach and his readiness to alter his proposals without sacrificing the fundamental points in his programme.

At the open session of the Congress, it was Kasturi Ranga Iyengar who, on behalf of the Madras Nationalist delegates, supported the resolution on non-co-operation.

"As it is the desire of some of my fellow-delegates and friends in Madras," he said, "to convey to this Congress through me their hearty support of this resolution on non-co-operation, I rise to say a few words on this occasion. There has been some difference of opinion among Madras Nationalists as to the particular methods of carrying out the principle of non-co-operation. In the resolution which is now framed, it is felt that we have arrived at a satisfactory scheme of non-co-operation in which all those who believe in the principle of non-co-operation can take effective part. The resolution now before the Congress is a comprehensive, practical and truly national scheme of non-co-operation. It ensures national education which is the basis and foundation of all political effort and political progress. It ensures the fostering of national industries and the prevention of foreign exploitation of all national resources. It provides for the enlistment of young men for doing national service. It consolidates national forces of all kinds for the promotion of national unity and national action. The resolution, in short, is, I consider, a serious business-like programme expressive of the national conscience of this country so far as that national conscience can be given expression to by this Indian National Congress; and who can say that a National Congress such as this which contains more than 14,000 delegates is not competent to express the national will and national sentiment? I give my whole-hearted support to this resolution, and I hope that all those who are interested in the unity of the Indian people and in the attainment of Swaraj will cordially support it and endeavour to carry it out by all means in their power."

Jitendra Lal Bannerjee of Bengal, in supporting the resolution, said, "I support the resolution all the more because I now find that this resolution has been the means of reconciling such men as our esteemed friend Mr Kasturi

Ranga Iyengar. Even he has supported it and when *The Hindu* supports it in Madras, what can possibly stand in the way of the onrushing sweep of the tide of non-co-operation ?"

The non-co-operation resolution marked the birth of a new era, the Gandhian era, in the country's politics.

CHAPTER 22

NON-CO-OPERATOR

The nation's response to the Congress call for non-co-operation was beyond all expectations. Young and old joined the National Volunteer Corps in their thousands and went about the country preaching the philosophy of non-violent non-co-operation with the Government, as advised by Gandhiji. They addressed public meetings, picketed schools and liquor shops peacefully. As the preaching of non-co-operation with the Government was considered seditious, many of the local leaders were arrested and sentenced. Thousands of lawyers all over the country suspended practice and threw themselves heart and soul into the non-co-operation movement.

Panchayats were set up in large numbers to settle disputes without recourse to the British courts. There was an immediate and sharp fall in the revenue to the Government from court fees and stamps. Lakhs of students were withdrawn from Government-run or Government-aided educational institutions. Simultaneously, National Colleges, National Universities and National Schools were organized everywhere. The National Muslim University of Aligarh, the Gujarat Vidyapith, the Kashi Vidyapith, and numerous colleges and schools came into being within a few months.

Mahatma Gandhi had emphasized the positive aspects of national reconstruction as an essential counterpart of the non-co-operation movement. Along with the boycott of foreign cloth, there was the campaign to revive the *charkha* and popularize hand-spinning and hand-weaving. Khadi became the symbol of national revolt and resurgence.

Spinning wheels were produced in large numbers and distributed to enthusiastic workers in towns and villages. The hum of the *charkha* was heard in thousands of homes, in the mansions of the rich and the cottages of the poor, in towns and in villages. Children took to the *takli* and learnt to produce yarn from it.

Another important programme approved by the Nagpur Congress, the collection of one crore of rupees for a fund to be called the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund, for financing a band of national workers throughout the country, was also taken up in right earnest by Congressmen everywhere. The Congress organization was also activated, Congress committees being established at the village, taluk and district levels under the Provincial Congress Committees.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, on his return to Madras from Nagpur, plunged into the non-co-operation movement. *The Hindu's* columns were liberally devoted to covering the new outburst of national activity in every part of the country and spreading the message of non-co-operation and constructive work. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was elected Treasurer of the Madras Tilak Swaraj Fund and he engaged himself vigorously in collecting money for the national cause. The Madras collections very soon exceeded a lakh of rupees. For the country, as a whole, the target of one crore of rupees, fixed for the Swaraj Fund, was exceeded by July 1, 1921.

The Nagpur Congress had commended close cooperation between Congressmen and the workers and the Depressed Classes. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar actively interested himself in this work. Even as early as March 1920, he had helped to organize the South Indian Railway Employees' Association at Tiruchi. The inaugural meeting was held under his presidentship and he was elected the Association's first President.

Labour leaders like B. Shiva Rao, V. Chakkarai Chetty, B. P. Wadia and T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar sought his advice and help on the problems facing them. V. Chakkarai Chetty, one of the founders of the Labour movement in Madras, recalling Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's services to the labour movement, wrote in 1923 : "Labour ought to be grateful to his memory for the support he gave their cause in Madras. In the year 1921, the Pulianthope trouble took place when 10,000 labourers were locked out of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, in the City. Choolai, Purasawalkam and Vepery at that time were, as it were, under martial law administration. At that time, in those places the police bayonets were gleaming. The leaders of labour were threatened by the Governor with deportation. Then it was *The Hindu* under the Editorship of Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar that came forward and defended their cause."

During this strike Kasturi Ranga Iyengar attended a public meeting of the citizens at the Triplicane beach to express sympathy with the cause of the workers of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. The meeting resolved "to help the workmen in their fight against capitalists, to express their resolve to sustain them during the continuation of the dispute, and to condemn the attitude of the Government who attributed the labour troubles to political causes." Kasturi Ranga Iyengar donated five hundred rupees for the strikers' relief and was elected a member of the Committee that was formed to render help to the strikers. He was also elected a member of another committee "for protecting mill workers against violence and other troubles".

At one of the labour meetings during this period, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar extended support to the idea of establishing a Labour Workshop in Madras City. He also

favoured the establishment of a Service Bureau where applications of workmen in quest of work might be received and information about available jobs given to them.

The Kerosene Oil Workers' Union, the Madras Labour Union and many other labour organizations found in Kasturi Ranga Iyengar a sympathetic leader, a generous patron and an influential champion of their interests.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had been interested in the uplift of the Depressed Classes even before the Congress advised its members to take up their cause. During the years 1915 to 1920, there was in Madras only one organization interested in the elevation of the Depressed Classes. It was the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India which had a branch in Madras. Sir C. Sankaran Nair was President and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Vice-President of the Society. The Society started a number of day and night schools. It proposed to erect a building of its own for locating a school at Vyasarpady in the City. Appeals to the public to contribute funds did not produce enough response. It was then suggested to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar that the work of the building should not be delayed for any reason; the contractor was willing to complete the construction of the building if some one was found to guarantee the payment of the money. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar readily volunteered to stand guarantee. The building was constructed and the school opened at Vyasarpady, the first private school for the Depressed Classes to be started in Madras.

In the course of his non-co-operation activities, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar visited Mysore State in the middle of 1921. In Bangalore, presiding over the Mysore Young Men's Convention, he made public his views on the future of the Indian Princely States. In his closing address to the Convention, he urged the rulers of Princely States to put

their houses in order and give responsible government to their people. "It seems to me the time is just coming", he said, "when rulers of native States could not play pranks with the people of the States. We all know that in British India we are expecting Swaraj to be obtained at an early date. The rulers of these States derive power from the Paramount Power in this country. If the Paramount Power in this country is in danger of losing its power, I believe you will understand in what position these rulers who have derivative power will be in. In British India we are fast reaching our goal. We shall soon be placed, I hope, in possession of the powers which will enable us to say to the rulers of the native States that unless they put their houses in order, the policy which should determine the administration of these States will have to be reconsidered." He recalled that in Europe, as a result of the Great War, "thrones which were supposed to be unassailable and impregnable have crumbled down," and said that this should be a warning to Indian Princes.

The Government's answer to the Congress campaign of non-co-operation was an orgy of arrests. Hundreds of volunteers and minor Congress leaders were sentenced for making seditious speeches, and repression was the order of the day. In November 1921, the Ali Brothers, Shaukat Ali and Mohamed Ali, were arrested. The Congress Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee met at Delhi to consider the situation. It was then decided to authorize all Provincial Congress Committees to start full non-co-operation, including no-tax campaigns, in their respective areas, depending on local conditions.

It was at this time that the Prince of Wales, who was at Delhi, visited Bombay. The Congress called upon the people to observe a complete *hartal* on that day and boycott all public and private functions organized in the Prince's

honour. This was observed to the letter, but there was also serious rioting, which the best efforts of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarojini Devi could not control.

In view of the Bombay experience, the Government took some extraordinary measures when the Prince of Wales visited Calcutta next month. They put behind bars Desabandhu C. R. Das, his wife, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Moderate Congress leaders like Pandit Malaviya strove at this juncture to effect a compromise between the Congress and the Government. But the effort proved fruitless. The annual session of the Congress met at Ahmedabad. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, although he had not been elected to the All-India Congress Committee, attended the session in view of the critical atmosphere in which the Congress was meeting to discuss the nation's problems.

Desabandhu Das had been originally elected to preside over the Ahmedabad session, but as he had been arrested, Hakim Ajmal Khan was voted to the Presidentship. The Congress fully endorsed earlier decisions on non-co-operation, but made it clear that Civil Disobedience should not be started until the people were properly trained and became qualified to conduct such a campaign peacefully. Every Congress volunteer was expected to sign a pledge of service, and Mahatma Gandhi was given full powers as a 'dictator' to conduct the movement. The Congress also appealed to those moderate elements in the organization who might not have full faith in non-co-operation to co-operate in the achievement of unity and solidarity in the country. The Ahmedabad Congress put the organization under the Mahatma's complete direction to give it strength and unity. The Congress tricolour flag became popular, and the Gandhi cap a symbol of defiant patriotism in offices and public places.

The Madras delegates to the Ahmedabad Congress, at one of their meetings held under the presidentship of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, decided in accordance with the Congress mandate, to call for a complete *hartal* on the day the Prince of Wales was due to visit Madras.

The Prince visited the City in January 1922. The whole City observed *hartal* and all the functions got up in the Prince's honour were boycotted by the public.

The month of January also saw the convening of an All-Parties Leaders' Conference at Bombay with the avowed objective of effecting a compromise between the Congress and the Government. Mahatma Gandhi, though he did not participate as a delegate in the Conference, addressed it, explaining the Congress point of view. The Conference appointed a 20-member committee to draft proposals for a compromise. Mahatma Gandhi was included in the Committee. When the Committee prepared a draft resolution on the terms for a compromise, the Chairman of the Conference, Sir Sankaran Nair, disagreed with the draft and refused to participate further in the Conference. In a statement issued at this time, he was highly critical of Mahatma Gandhi. The public reaction to Sir Sankaran Nair's action was one of strong resentment.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was perturbed at the news of Sir Sankaran Nair's withdrawal from the Conference. He was torn between the obligation to write strongly in criticism of Sankaran Nair's action and the desire not to hurt a close friend of long standing. A junior colleague of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, G. S. Raghavan, has described the mental conflict that the Editor experienced at the time : "Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was not afraid to strike, but was unwilling to wound." He finally wrote an editorial which was at once considerate and plain-spoken : "Another most unhappy feature of the situation is the action

of Sir Sankaran Nair in withdrawing from the Conference and in inditing a ferocious letter to *The Times of India* (attacking Mahatma Gandhi and the non-co-operation movement)....It seems to us that Sir Sankaran Nair not only gravely erred in accepting the position of Chairman of the Conference, but he has grossly misconceived the duties attaching to it, and has injured the public cause by the manner in which he has vented his feelings and prejudices....In any case, the long tirade against Mahatma Gandhi and his followers which Sir Sankaran Nair has thought fit on this occasion to give expression to was uncalled for and unjust. It was as a member of the Indian Nationalist Party that he was called upon to take part in the proceedings of the Conference. It is clear that by his action and his pronouncements justifying it he arrogated to himself the functions of the Government which is the other party to the Conference."

Sir Sankaran Nair followed his performance at the All-Parties Leaders' Conference with a book attacking the Mahatma virulently. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar felt very sorry that his old friend should act in this fashion. "I quite agree with you," he wrote in a letter to C. Vijiaraghavachariar, "that Sir Sankaran Nair has done the country the greatest disservice possible."

As a result of the strong attitude taken by *The Hindu*, the long-standing friendship between Sir Sankaran Nair and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar came to an end. Sankaran Nair never forgave Kasturi Ranga Iyengar for his outspokenness. But Kasturi Ranga Iyengar treated the episode as one more sacrifice he had to make for doing his duty as a journalist and patriot.

Although the Congress Working Committee had accepted the resolution of the Leaders' Conference, and decided not to start the contemplated Civil Disobedience Programme

till the end of the month, the Viceroy, Lord Reading, refused to accept the resolution of the Conference. The Congress felt that it had no alternative but to go ahead with its programme. Mahatma Gandhi, who had been given full powers to direct the campaign, wrote to the Viceroy that he would shortly be starting his campaign of Satyagraha at Bardoli in Gujarat. The Viceroy replied to Gandhiji stating that the Government had ample reasons for following a policy of repression.

In February, 1922, serious riots took place at Chauri Chaura in Uttar Pradesh and Mahatma Gandhi, who had gone to Bardoli to initiate the satyagraha campaign, suspended the campaign as a consequence. On the 11th of February, the Congress Working Commitee met at Bardoli and suspended Civil Disobedience. It called on all Congress organizations and Congressmen to strengthen the Congress by resort to an intensive programme of "constructive activities". Enrolment of members to the Congress, propagating the use of the *charkha,* greater production and patronage of *khaddar,* promotion of panchayats, intensification of national education, greater interest in improving the lot of the Depressed Classes and collection of money for the Tilak Swaraj Fund were some of the activities included in this programme. The All-India Congress Committee meeting at Delhi later in February, confirmed the decision of the Working Committee to suspend Civil Disobedience.

It was while things were taking a less belligerent turn that the Government chose to arrest Gandhiji on March 10, 1922. Mahatma Gandhi's arrest came about immediately after a change in the India Office in London. Only a day earlier, on March 9, the resignation of Edwin Montagu as Secretary of State for India was announced. Montagu had differences with other members of the British Cabinet on the handling of the India question. The post-

war settlement of the Turkish question, over which Indian Muslims had been greatly agitated, was one of the issues on which Montagu and his colleagues could not see eye to eye. The crisis came to a head as a result of a telegram sent to the British Government by the Viceroy of India and all Governors urging a revision of the Treaty of Sevres which dealt with Turkey. The Secretary of State permitted publication of the telegram. A storm in a teacup blew up and the "unprecedented action of the India Government in publicly formulating a policy for the Imperial Government in contravention of all constitutional traditions" and the action of the Secretary of State in allowing publication of the communication led to the resignation of Montagu. He was succeeded by Austen Chamberlain, who had been Secretary of State before Montagu had replaced him earlier.

The first result of a change in the India Office was a stiffening of the Government's attitude to Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress. Gandhiji's arrest was almost the first decision of the new Secretary of State. He was charged with sedition and later sentenced to six years' imprisonment. In a message on the eve of his arrest, Mahatma Gandhi appealed to the nation "to keep absolute peace" and carry out the constructive programme.

In an editorial on "Mahatma Gandhi's Arrest", *The Hindu* asked the people not to waste their time in grief but carry out the programme laid down by the Mahatma. It said : "We may take it that the stiffening of opinion in England is the prime cause of the arrest. It is difficult to explain it otherwise coming as it does at this moment. We could have understood it if he had been arrested when he announced his intention to start civil disobedience on a specified date or even earlier when the Congress Working Committee decided to embark on civil disobedience in the mass. On both occasions, the Government lay low

because there was nobody to egg them on . . . . It is a challenge thrown in the face of the country. Government feel that the movement has had too much rope, has grown stronger than it imagined could be possible with 'the most futile of all movements.' And it seeks to crush the movement by arresting its originator. As is usual with all repression, its action is neither timely nor thorough. For one thing, it is too late; for another, the Government cannot build enough jails for all those who will have to be arrested if the movement is to be scotched. The response of the country must be clear and unmistakable. That there will be unbounded resentment at the action goes without saying, but what must be insisted on is that resentment should translate itself to a strengthening of our purpose and not waste itself in futile violence. We commend to the attention of our readers the simple and affecting message issued by the Mahatma on the eve of his arrest and would ask them to steel their hearts and set to work upon the programme without wasting their energy in useless grief."

With the arrest of the Mahatma, there was a certain feeling of helplessness in Congress circles. While a large number of persons were urging the revival of Civil Disobedience, there were other leaders who felt that without the serene guidance of Mahatma Gandhi it would be unwise to start such a campaign. The All-India Congress Committee, meeting at Lucknow on June 7, earnestly appealed to the country to carry on the constructive programme and requested the President to appoint a Committee to report on the situation in the country as regards its preparedness for Civil Disobedience.

Accordingly, the President, Hakim Ajmal Khan, appointed a committee of enquiry, with himself as Chairman, and Pandit Motilal Nehru, Dr M. A. Ansari, V. J. Patel, Jamnalal Bajaj, C. Rajagopalachari and Seth

Chothani as members. Seth Jamnalal Bajaj could not accept the offer and in his place Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was appointed a member of the Committee. Seth Chothani did not participate in the work of the Committee.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had not been in good health for some months now. He had liver trouble and had also to undergo an operation for hernia. He was not really in a position to undertake the intensive travel that the work of the Civil Disobedience Committee might involve. But the Congress President, Hakim Ajmal Khan, and other members of the Committee were keen that he should take part in the Committee's work. Ajmal Khan and Dr Ansari, both of them eminent medical men, assured him that they would take him under their care and look after his health. Pressed in this manner, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar agreed.

On June 30, the Committee started its work at Delhi. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar joined it at Jubbulpore on July 9. The Committee toured the whole of India and took written evidence from witnesses on the issues of Civil Disobedience and Council-entry. Altogether 459 persons presented written statements and 366 were examined *in camera.* The Committee finished its labours by October and submitted its report on October 30, 1922.

As the Committee went round the country assessing opinion, it found that apart from the wisdom or otherwise of starting Civil Disobedience immediately, the question whether it was advisable to enter the Legislative Councils was becoming a hotly-discussed issue. There were two camps in the country on this question. On the one side, Desabandhu C. R. Das was preaching Council-entry; on the other, orthodox "no-changers" like C. Rajagopalachari thought that Council-entry at that juncture was dangerous to the national cause and would weaken national effort. They wanted to put more emphasis on the "constructive programme", such

as *khaddar,* Swadeshi, prohibition of liquor and national education.

The members of the Civil Disobedience Committee met at Patna after their tour round the country to discuss among themselves the issues for framing their recommendations. V. J. Patel was the only member who had been from the start pressing for Council-entry. At this stage, the Committee decided that it need not make any recommendations on this subject. With the approval of the President of the Committee, Dr Ansari prepared a draft resolution stating that since a large number of leaders were in jail, consideration of this issue might be postponed for the time being. When the Committee again met at Calcutta on September 1, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar agreed to this draft. But, about this time, owing to the efforts of Desabandhu Das, Motilal Nehru changed his views on the subject and became a convert to Council-entry. Following this, V. J. Patel, Motilal Nehru and Hakim Ajmal Khan met at Amritsar on the 17th and 18th and decided formally to press for Council-entry. As a result, when the Committee finally met at Delhi on October 7 to give final shape to its report, the Committee was evenly divided. Three members, V. J. Patel, Motilal Nehru and Hakim Ajmal Khan, were for Council-entry, and three others, Dr Ansari, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and C. Rajagopalachari, were against it. Therefore, the Committee decided to make two separate recommendations on the question.

The Committee's report dealt mainly with Civil Disobedience, Council-entry and the boycott of Government educational institutions and law courts.

On Civil Disobedience, the Committee was unanimous. It recommended that the country was not prepared at the present time to embark upon Mass Civil Disobedience; but

in view of the fact that a situation might arise in any part of the country demanding an immediate resort to mass Civil Disobedience of a limited character, *e.g.*, the breaking of a particular law or the non-payment of a particular tax, for which the people might be ready, it recommended that Provincial Congress Committees be authorized to sanction such limited Mass Civil Disobedience on their own responsibility if the conditions laid down by the All-India Congress Committee in that behalf were fulfilled.

On entry into Legislative Councils, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Motilal Nehru and V. J. Patel recommended that since the working of the new Legislative Councils had proved a great obstacle to the redress of the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs and the speedy attainment of Swaraj, Congress non-co-operators should contest elections on the issue of the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs and make every endeavour to get returned in a majority. It was further recommended that if the non-co-operators were returned in a majority, they should not take part in the proceedings, and thus paralyse the work of the legislature. If they were not returned in a big enough majority, they should attend every session and oppose every measure of the Government including the budget and also move resolutions for the redress of the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs. If the non-co-operators were returned in a minority, they should not attend the Council sessions and thus reduce the strength of the Councils. Since elections to the new Councils were impending, it was further recommended that the next session of the Congress should decide on the question and give a lead to the country.

Dr Ansari, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Rajagopalachari, who signed a separate recommendation on Council-entry, said that "there should be no change in the Congress

programme in respect of the boycott of Councils." Explaining their views, the three leaders said that the proposal of entry into Councils, in whatever form, involved a distinct violation of the principle of non-co-operation and a clear departure from the policy of the Congress which was inaugurated in the Calcutta Special Session and reaffirmed at Nagpur and Ahmedabad. The Legislative Councils were the institutions on which Government relied for its strength and prestige. To enter the Councils now would be a retrograde step for the Congress and would enable the Government to regain its lost prestige.

Judging by the number of witnesses before the Committee who favoured Council-entry and those who opposed it, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Dr Ansari and Rajagopalachari said that there was no doubt that the country generally was against entry into the Councils. They also referred to the view that the Councils should be entered with a view to wrecking the Reforms, and said that in their opinion entry into Councils for the avowed purpose of obstructing all measures whether good or bad, and of wrecking the Reforms, was obnoxious to the principle and spirit of the non-co-operation movement as conceived by its great leader. Further the Constructive Programme of the Congress required intensive effort to bring the country to the level of preparedness for undertaking civil disobedience, and a campaign of entry into Councils at such a time would have the certain effect of relegating the Constructive Programme to the cold shade of neglect.

The Committee's recommendations on the boycott of Government educational institutions and law courts were unanimous. It advised a strict adherence to the earlier resolution suspending active propaganda calling upon boys to come out of Government schools and colleges. It called

for an emphasis on improving national schools and colleges so that boys should be drawn to these by their own superiority rather than by picketing or aggressive propaganda.

Regarding the boycott of courts, the Committee unanimously agreed that the boycott should be continued and a concentrated effort made to establish panchayats and to strengthen public opinion in their favour.

The Committee unanimously advised Congressmen to stand for election to local bodies in order to do as much good as possible to the people through them.

With the dissenting voice of C. Rajagopalachari, the Committee accepted the principle of boycott of British goods and recommended that the whole question be referred to a committee of experts. C. Rajagopalachari did not accept the principle of boycott and thought that boycott would mislead the nation and injure the national movement.

Recalling his association with Kasturi Ranga Iyengar during the work on the Committee, Pandit Motilal Nehru said in 1928 : "I have had the privilege of personal friendship with the late Kasturi Ranga Iyengar whose lovable personality and earnestness of purpose made a deep impression on me when we worked together on the Civil Disobedience Committee." Another person who came to know Kasturi Ranga Iyengar during the same committee days, Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, recalled at a later date : "I crossed swords with him as a witness before the Civil Disobedience Committee. But I found him placid and courteous, unlike some of his colleagues."

The recommendations of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee were taken up for consideration by the All-India Congress Committee which met on November 20, 1922. C. R. Das spoke emphasizing the importance of unity, and

after him Pandit Motilal Nehru moved a resolution approving the Civil Disobedience Committee's recommendations that the country was not yet ready for Civil Disobedience. The resolution was passed.

Next day, Pandit Motilal Nehru moved a resolution permitting Council-entry by Congressmen. The resolution was hotly debated, but at the end it was agreed that it should be left to the next session of the Congress, which was to meet in a month, to decide.

When in December the Congress met at Gaya, with C. R. Das in the chair, the Congress approved the recommendations of the Civil Disobedience Committee that the country was not yet ready for mass Civil Disobedience. On Council-entry, after a heated debate, it accepted the view expressed by Dr Ansari, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and C. Rajagopalachari that Congressmen should not enter Councils for the time being.

Chapter 23

LAST DAYS

The stress and strain of incessant travel in connection with the work of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee, notwithstanding all the precautions taken by his friends, told on Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's health. On his return to Madras after completing the Committee's work, he had to take complete rest. But though confined to bed, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar continued to take a lively interest in national affairs on the one hand, and the affairs of *The Hindu* on the other.

So far as the paper was concerned, the early months of 1923 witnessed significant improvements. There had been a phenomenal increase in the circulation of the paper during the war and post-war years and it was necessary to improve the press to cope with the demands of a growing print order. The circulation reached what was for that period the record figure of 17,000 copies a day. The premises of the paper were enlarged and a new rotary printing press, the first in Madras, was installed. A battery of modern composing machines was put into operation and the press was made up to date in other ways also. Arrangements were made for the expeditious receipt of news by telegram and cable and for the quicker delivery of the paper even to remote areas.

On the national front, the question of Council-entry was dominating public attention. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was of the view that Congress entry into the Councils would result in a dissipation of national energies and hoped that

the minority which was pressing for Council-entry would gracefully bow to majority opinion.

C. R. Das, who was the leader of the minority view, had by this time started his Swarajist Party as a group working within the Congress. He launched a vigorous campaign throughout the country for getting Congressmen's approval for Council-entry. Though Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had no objection in principle to a campaign for Council-entry, he doubted the wisdom of starting a separate party within the Congress for this purpose. Opposing the formation of the Swaraj Party, *The Hindu* wrote on January 2, 1923 : "Mr Das's action we can hardly regard as anything less than a secession. In the first place, it will be noted, the resignation of Mr Das from the Presidentship of the All-India Congress Committee for the present year, which naturally devolves upon him owing to his election to the Congress Presidency, followed, it is to be presumed, by similar resignations elsewhere by his colleagues and followers, can only be interpreted as a refusal to co-operate in the working of the Congress programme. . To put it briefly and baldly, it is not enough that they are within the Congress. They must be within the Congress organizations and continue the work they have been doing. . . . Mr Das and his friends will recognize that it is somewhat inconsistent to talk of democracy and to threaten revolt when the majority is against you. On the other hand, it cannot be too strongly impressed on the victorious side that majority rule can only be successful as long as it is tolerant, as long as it is conducted in a spirit of give and take."

C. R. Das undertook a tour of the country and arrived at Madras on May 3. He met Kasturi Ranga Iyengar at his house and had a long talk with him. The talk, however, did not lead to any change of views on either side. Das toured the Tamil districts of Madras Presidency with the

hope of converting Congressmen in the south to his point of view. *The Hindu* fully reported Das's activities, though editorially it was not in sympathy with his views.

The Desabandhu's chief lieutenant in Madras was A. Rangaswami Iyengar, Editor of *Swadesamitran*. Finding that *The Hindu* was not editorially extending support to Council-entry, Rangaswami Iyengar started a new weekly in English styled the *Swadesamitran English Weekly*.

Congress leaders at this time were divided into two major groups, the "no-changers" and the "pro-changers." Led by C. Rajagopalachari, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and others, the "no-changers" were opposed to Council-entry and wanted to enforce the earlier Congress resolution on boycott of elections strictly. The country was, according to this resolution, to be advised not to vote in any elections or to participate in any way whatever in the elections. The "pro-changers", led by C. R. Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru, A. Rangaswami Iyengar and others, wanted the Congress to capture the Councils to prevent reactionaries from entering them and misusing the legislature in a manner opposed to the national interests.

Various efforts were made to effect a reconciliation between the two groups, but they were of no avail until the All-India Congress Committee meeting in May 1923. It was at this meeting that it was decided that Congressmen should not do active propaganda against Council-entry, although the ban on Congressmen entering the Councils would remain. This was a compromise designed to satisfy both the groups, and for the time being harmony was achieved. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's views on the agreement were reflected in *The Hindu* which said : "There will be general agreement that the All-India Congress Committee has done wisely in deciding upon the suspension

of the 'no vote' campaign. . . . It would of course be foolish to run away with the idea that with this achievement our storms have been weathered and that all is going to be plain sailing with the Congress. The Swarajist Party have not got all that they asked for, but it is safe to presume that they have got as much as they expected. It was obviously impossible for the Congress Committee to reverse the considered decision of successive sessions of the Congress and lift the Council boycott. What it could do for the sake of unity, however, it has done and we hope the Swarajist Party realizes the measure of sacrifice made and keeps in mind the purpose for which it was made."

The All-India Congress Committee's decision had other repercussions. The "no-changers" were unwilling to continue in executive positions in the Congress Working Committee. All but one of the members of the Working Committee including Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad and Vallabhbhai Patel, resigned in June 1923. These resignations posed a new threat to Congress unity, this time from the "no-changers". C. Rajagopalachari maintained that the A.I.C.C.'s decision should not be endorsed at the plenary session of the Congress. His argument was that the four-fold programme of constructive activity advised by Gandhiji would be difficult of achievement if attention was diverted to Council-entry.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar did not agree with this view. *The Hindu* wrote: "We cannot subscribe to the proposition that Civil Disobedience and the culmination of the four-fold path are in any degree more distant because the elders of the Congress have been instructed to desist from activity destroying the Swarajists' chances of success."

The ensuing months produced greater success for the Swarajists' efforts. Congress opinion in the country was slowly veering round in favour of Council-entry, and by

September 1923, when the Special session of the Congress met at Delhi under the presidentship of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, opinion was decisively in favour of permitting Congressmen's entry into the Legislatures.

Reflecting the change in public opinion, *The Hindu* welcomed the new attitude: "It is gratifying that at long last and much to the chagrin of its enemies, the Special Congress has been able to attain the much-needed unity between the Swarajist and the 'no-change' parties...... Believing, as we do, that the Council-entry issue has been given an entirely fictitious importance in the face of much graver questions yet to be tackled, it is to be hoped that with this vexed question out of the way, the Congress will be able with renewed strength to solve them."

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, as a firm believer in the constructive programme of the Congress, continued to assist in this work even from his sick bed. As Treasurer of the Tilak Swaraj Fund, he was continually appealing for funds for the national cause and succeeded in collecting a substantial amount. In a fitting tribute to his efforts, the Tamil Nad Provincial Congress Committee, meeting at Madurai on June 17, 1923, unanimously resolved that "The grateful thanks of the Committee be conveyed to Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, who has in spite of serious illness undertaken and successfully carried on the work of collecting money for the Tilak Swaraj Fund in the province."

The policy of *The Hindu* and its Editor in actively supporting the non-co-operation programme of the Congress was gall and wormwood to the Government. An incident of this period illustrates how men dressed in a little brief authority could inflict minor pinpricks on the press. In November 1923, a month before the Viceroy, Lord Reading,

was due to visit Madras, the Government graciously chose to withhold all Government House news and advance copies of the Viceroy's tour programme from *The Hindu*. At Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's direction, R. Ganesa Aiyar, Chief Reporter of the paper, met E. Conran Smith, the Private Secretary to the Governor, Lord Willingdon, to protest against this action. The meeting took place at the Secretariat buildings in Fort St. George, and we have the following interesting record of what happened at the interview :

Ganesa Aiyar : Good morning, Sir.

Private Secretary : Good morning to you.

G. A. : I have been asked by the Editor of *The Hindu* to find out from you why we have not been receiving the Government House news for the last few days and why we did not receive a copy of the Viceroy's Tour Programme when a copy was sent to other papers like *The Madras Mail, The Daily Express, New India* and *Justice.*

P. S. : You are a non-co-operating paper. When you do not co-operate with the Government, why should Government co-operate with you ?

G. A. : Knowing that our paper is a non-co-operating paper, why have you been sending all kinds of news to *The Hindu* all these years and why do you suddenly stop the news just now ? You were extending all the privileges to the representatives of *The Hindu* which you gave to the representatives of other papers.

P. S. : We ought to have stopped such news to *The Hindu* long ago. That we gave you the news in the past is no reason why we should continue to do so in the future.

G. A. : It seems you told our representative the other day that *The Hindu* is making personal attacks upon His Excellency the Governor, that it is a non-co-operation paper and that therefore you would not give him the list of nominated members to the Council. Can you show a single instance where *The Hindu* had made a personal attack against His Excellency ?

P. S. : Quite a number. Even the other day there was as attack upon Her Excellency. It was an insult offered to Her Excellency.

G. A. : You are referring to a proposed memorial ?

P. S. : Yes.

G. A. : We do say that Her Excellency has not done so much valuable public work to the country as to deserve a statue. How can it be considered an insult and a personal attack ? In saying that, we simply express the popular view. Any other instance, Sir ?

P. S. : *The Hindu* wrote a leaderette the other day in connection with my refusal to give the nomination list. It is simply insulting me. This is the cutting from the paper and, if you like, you may refresh your memory. The expression used there is "antics of the Private Secretary." It is childish, discourteous, written in bad taste.

G. A. : You consider the article childish, discourteous, insulting and in bad taste. There are others, very many, who expressed their high appreciation of it. Very good, even supposing that it is in bad taste, are you going to withhold all news relating to His Excellency the Governor's public functions and His Excellency the Viceroy's public functions and news of similar nature from *The Hindu* for the reasons you have stated ?

P. S. : Yes, you are a non-co-operating paper.

G. A. : We are. But are you going to deprive the readers of *The Hindu,* a very large public, of the news which I have referred to and which they legitimately expect from us ?

P. S. : Yes, you are a non-co-operating paper. You want to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.

G. A. : We have never done that. We have been consistent in our policy. We have never changed our policy. Yet, we have been receiving all news from Government hitherto. Now you are going to stop it. You are at perfect liberty to stop the news. But may I understand that His Excellency's Private Secretary has the authority and sanction of His Excellency in what he says and does ?

P. S. : I have spoken to His Excellency on this matter. His Excellency tells me : "I don't mind *The Hindu's* personal attack on me. You have been personally attacked. My wife has been attacked. I give you liberty in the matter of furnishing news." I thought you had come to apologize.

G. A. : No, Sir. I have been asked by the Editor to ascertain from you why *The Hindu* has not been receiving Government House news for some days past, but not to apologize to you for anything done by *The Hindu.* I shall report the whole thing to him and if, after hearing me, he asks me to go and apologize to you on his behalf, I shall take another opportunity to come here and do so.

P. S. : I suppose there will be a leader again in *The Hindu* today.

G. A. : There may be.

P. S. : Mr Ganesa Aiyar, you seem to be a man of experience. Suppose you are in the position of His Excellency the Governor and you are attacked by a newspaper like this, what would you do ?

G. A. : News is different from views. I would not mind such criticisms, but continue giving news to that paper as your predecessors have been doing in spite of vigorous criticisms against the administration of the successive Governors whose Private Secretaries they were. They never considered those criticisms as personal attacks. Anyhow, you are not going to give us Government House news and news of that kind. I shall tell the Editor so. Good-bye to you.

P. S. : Good-bye.

When Ganesa Aiyar reported the interview to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, he was pleased with the dignity and firmness with which his Chief Reporter had upheld the position of the paper. The immediate result of the interview was that the ban on the supply of Government House news to *The Hindu* was removed and *The Hindu's* Chief Reporter and the Governor's Private Secretary became good friends.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had been confined to bed for nearly a year. Though he was ailing his vigorous mind could not keep still. A steady stream of visitors used

to call on him and get the benefit of his advice on political, social and other problems. He continued to read newspapers and mark extracts for publication in *The Hindu* and to issue instructions to the Editorial staff on matters of policy. For two hours in the afternoon every day he listened to religious and devotional songs. He bore the pain and discomfort he suffered with uncomplaining serenity.

He had to undergo an operation and stood it well, but his general condition continued to deteriorate. On December 12, 1923, in the early hours of the morning, as he was talking to the members of his family, he suffered a severe bronchial attack. And at 5.45 a.m. he breathed his last.

The news of the passing away of the doyen among Editors in Madras spread rapidly in the city and a stream of visitors—distinguished men and common folk—called at "Farm House", his residence, to pay their last respects. The funeral ceremonies commenced at 9.30 a.m. Amidst temple honours such as the traditional *parivattam* and the chanting of *mantras* and hymns the body was placed on the bier for the last journey. A large number of citizens joined in the funeral procession through Mowbray's Road and Elliots Road to the Mylapore cremation ground.

At the cremation ground, after the customary rites, a number of funeral orations were made. T. Prakasam, veteran Andhra Congress leader and Editor of *Swarajya,* said that one of the greatest leaders of India and one, who during many years of the great national struggle, had done all that was possible to build up the nation in south India, had passed away. He had been accessible to all classes of people. He had maintained the standards of journalism at a very high level and had fought for the freedom of the people without fear of Government. The

passing of such a great man was the severest loss which south India could have sustained at such a critical juncture.

Maulana Yakub Hassan said that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was one of the few people who had courageously come forward to take a prominent part in the great struggle India was making for freedom. He had identified himself whole-heartedly with the Khilafat movement and become one of its greatest leaders. He had endeared himself to all classes of people. Although for the last two years he had not been well, he was still a great inspiration to all national workers. While all communities, of course, mourned his loss, the Mohamedan community was particularly grieved at his passing away.

Speaking on behalf of Labour, T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, Tamil scholar, Editor and labour leader, said that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's body had suffered death but his work was imperishable. Apart from the loss to the journalistic world, his death was equally a loss to the Labour world. He knew no distinction of caste or creed. When two years earlier, the workers of a big mill in the city were without employment, it was Kasturi Ranga Iyengar who did his best to support them both with his pen and with his money. His services to the cause of Labour would be remembered for ever by the working class. M. Singaravelu, representing the backward communities, said that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had been of very great help to the fishermen community.

The ashes were taken to Allahabad later on and committed to the waters of the Triveni Sangam.

Tributes to the departed leader came from all parts of India and from abroad.

Only a few days prior to his death, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar had been elected the first President of the All-India Journalists' Association. At a meeting of the Association

at Bombay, K. Natarajan, Editor, *The Indian Social Reformer*, paid a glowing tribute to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's work as a publicist, patriot and journalist.

S. A. Brelvi, Editor, *The Bombay Chronicle*, moved the following resolution : "This meeting of the Journalists' Association of India places on record its deep sense of the great loss sustained by Indian journalism by the death of Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, the Editor of *The Hindu* of Madras and the first President of this Association, who by his earnestness, zeal for his profession and undaunted patriotism and by his high personal character and abilities did much to raise journalism and public life to a high level of dignity and capacity." Brelvi said that it was not long ago that they had unanimously elected Kasturi Ranga Iyengar as their President. Great were their hopes that under his guidance they would carry out the ambitious programme they had in view.

The Indian National Congress, meeting at Cocanada in December 1923, adopted a resolution placing on record its deep sense of loss at the demise of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar who had rendered invaluable services to the cause of the country. The President of the Congress, Maulana Mohamed Ali, moving the resolution from the chair, said that he had first met Kasturi Ranga Iyengar when as a young journalist he, Mahomed Ali, had attended the Delhi Durbar in 1911 : "I felt from the first moment that I saw him that we had in him a thoroughly mellowed journalist, one who could combine in himself sweet reasonableness and strength of character. We have not many nationalist journals in India even today. But among the few we have, I think that we all acknowledge that *The Hindu* occupies one of the foremost places. I am a journalist myself. I know how it is easy for us to sink to a low level in the heat of controversy. But I can say this much about *The Hindu* that its leading articles

and general conduct left upon everybody a great impression of dignity and sobriety without that cowardice which had fine connections and associations with sobriety. I do hope that *The Hindu* would prosper and it would be a great legacy to the journalists and also to those who have been working in the cause of India by the side of that great journalist, Sri Kasturi Ranga Iyengar."

Young India, Gandhiji's weekly paper, said: "In the death of Mr S. K. Iyengar India has lost one of her foremost leaders. His services to the country as a premier journalist are wellknown. When Mahatmaji started the Satyagraha campaign as well as when the non-co-operation movement began, neither age nor failing health made him falter, but he threw himself at once into the fight and gave Mahatmaji the greatest assistance. To south India especially, his death is an irretrievable loss."

The London *Times,* in an obituary note, described Kasturi Ranga Iyengar as "one of the most influential of Extremist journalists in India."

CHAPTER 24

SUMMING UP

The age to which Kasturi Ranga Iyengar belonged was marked by two phases. In the first phase, the general national feeling was one of thankfulness to the British for the peace, order and the rule of law that had been established in the country. There were no doubt incidents which caused self-respecting Indians to feel profoundly humiliated. There were occasions when British officials, here and there, showed an arrogant indifference to even the basic essentials of justice and impartiality in administration. But, by and large, there was a deeply valued sense of security and faith in British intentions. Although progress in the vital spheres of education and economic development was depressingly slow, there was a feeling that these were bound to improve gradually. The ideal of complete national freedom as something to be passionately striven for as an immediate goal had not become central to the thinking even of the educated classes. At this stage political-minded intellectuals were content to put their trust in British goodwill and to demand changes in the administration which would give the Indian people more opportunities for influencing policies and participating in the administration. This was the first phase in the political evolution of the country.

But with the extension of education and a wider awareness of the progress of nationalist movements in other lands, there was a growing consciousness of the humiliations involved in the continued subjection of a great country like ours to foreign rule. This was reinforced and strengthened by

the numerous manifestations of administrative highhandedness, and even deliberate attacks on the people by sections of the foreign bureaucracy. This opened the second phase in the evolution of Indian politics. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar belonged to this second phase in which he came to play a vital role. He became one of the vigorous champions of full self-government for the country.

Almost from the moment he left College, he was animated by a public spirit which was constantly drawing him away from a career for earning a living to one in which public service would be the dominant driving force. It was lucky that circumstances conspired to place him in charge of an organ of public opinion, which became in his hands a powerful instrument of public service. G. Subramania Iyer and M. Veeraraghavachariar, who had started *The Hindu,* had done much to make it a valued organ of public opinion, educating, guiding and reflecting it, but it was Kasturi Ranga Iyengar who united to their far-ranging vision an uncommon practical sense and launched *The Hindu* on its career as a national newspaper.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was no recluse despising the limelight and seeking to hide himself behind the facade of a fast-growing daily newspaper. He fought for the causes he believed in on the public platform nearly as often as he wrote in his paper. The first great task before a patriot in those arduous days was to get the public educated in the facts and implications of events affecting their well-being and honour in a manner designed to rouse them to concrete and fruitful action. With the combination of idealism and realism which he possessed, he gave a lead and guidance which were widely valued.

Four years after his death, unveiling a portrait of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar in *The Hindu* building, Mahatma Gandhi paid

a rare tribute which sums up the qualities of the man as a journalist and patriot. Mahatma Gandhi said :

"I had the privilege of knowing Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar for the first time in 1915 and in those days, when I was a fairly regular reader of newspapers, which I am not today, among the newspapers that I read was certainly *The Hindu* and I came to understand the value of the paper from that very moment. I believe that Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar represented some of the best that is to be found in journalism. He had a style all his own. He commanded a sarcasm which was also peculiarly his own. Whether he wrote as an opponent or as a friend, you could not fail to admire the style in which he wrote. Sometimes, the home-thrusts that he gave to his opponents, although they felt bitter at the time they were delivered, appeared to bear a great deal of truth in them because he had a most plausible style. He never wavered in his own faith in the country and although he was always a courteous critic, he was always one of the most fearless critics of the Government.

"I had on many an occasion to differ from him. But I always valued his decision because I understood thereby wherein lay the weakness of my argument or my position; because, I cannot recall an occasion when there was not something to be said for the argument that he advanced. I never thought that Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was an out and out reformer but he had cultivated journalism for the sake of journalism as it appeared to him. He felt that if he was to retain that character, he must not lead the country too much, but always accurately reflect its opinion.

"Those who followed the columns of *The Hindu* cannot fail to recognize that whenever they saw a change in the editorial policy, it was because with an unerring instinct he recognized which way the country was going, or which way

the wind was blowing. It may be said this was a defect in him, but I do not consider it to be so. If he had taken upon himself, as I venture to say I have, the role of a reformer, then he would have to give expression to his own opinion no matter what the whole country about him thought of it. I think that also is a phase in the country's life; but that is not the peculiar function of a journalist. A journalist's peculiar function is to read the mind of the country and to give definite and fearless expression to that mind. And I think that Mr Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was almost unrivalled in this quality of his."

If this was the public image that Kasturi Ranga Iyengar presented as Editor, inside the office he was a respected figure whom the younger men came to trust and revere. One of the younger journalists who worked under him, S. P. Thiagarajan, has given an interesting glimpse of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's attitude towards juniors which may serve as a model for any editor :

"What often struck his staff was his objectivity in news and his scrupulous fairness in the appraisal of policies and personalities. His own editorials were models of the judicial approach—a fair presentation of the opponent's case with nothing omitted or slurred over, the arguments against marshalled in formidable array and then the conclusion emerging with flawless impersonal logic. Very often he could not forbear the temptation to quote from one of his favourites, Burke, Bright, Mill or Morley, to enforce an argument. He was master of the apt phrase.

"He had another very excellent quality. He did not mind his sub-editors placing freely before him views opposed to his own. He so thoroughly put us all at ease. The respect he paid to the individuality of the staff deserved, and was paid back in, the profoundest regard for him by his staff."

In private life Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was a man of austere habits; he disdained ostentation. His domestic life was not always quite happy, but he was so much absorbed in his public activities and so completely taken up with his editorial obligations that he could rarely devote much attention to family affairs. He had in his wife a remarkably able lady who managed the affairs of a growing household. Thanks to her capacity for running the home, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar did not have to bother very much about domestic affairs.

Not given to demonstrative affection, he did not move with his sons with that intimacy that fonder parents might affect, but he took care to bring them up on the right lines. During the months he was away in Europe, when the management of the paper was entirely in the hands of his son, K. Srinivasan, he wrote the following letter which shows the values he cherished : "I have left a good lot of business matters for you to grapple with, but don't worry yourself too much over them. Take as much counsel as you can, and in all matters take the straightest and least devious paths possible and no harm will come to you."

K. Srinivasan, in recalling this letter on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of *The Hindu,* remarked : "When I read this, I felt immeasurably proud of my father whose success in life was mainly due to his strict adherence to this motto."

In his social relations, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was highly catholic and broad-minded. He numbered among his friends people belonging to all communities, who respected him for his innate courtesy and absolute freedom from prejudice. Though he came of an orthodox family, he was not personally orthodox in the narrow sense, except for keeping up the customary religious observances. Nor was he a crusader for social reform like some others of his contemporaries who believed that the reform of Indian society was the essential

condition of political advancement. But he was in sympathy with those belonging to the Depressed Classes and he strove in many ways to improve their condition.

As a fearless patriot and great journalist who held integrity and independence as the cardinal virtues of the profession, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar brought to public life many redeeming qualities in the years when the foundations of Indian freedom were being laid. He was drawn by the vision of a great future for India after she attained her freedom. Though the vision remained distanct and unrealized when he died, it was undimmed. He knew that others would carry on the torch and reach the goal. As for himself, he had the satisfaction of having lived a life dedicated to the service of the motherland. Of him can be said what Wordsworth said of "The Happy Warrior" :

> It is the generous spirit, who, when brought
> Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
> Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought :
> Whose high endeavours are an inward light
> That makes the path before him always bright :
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
> Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
> And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
> For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state.

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